

A PUBLIC TRUST
A SUMMARY AND OVERVIEW
OF THE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE
CARNEGIE COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF
PUBLIC BROADCASTING

The Commission and its Process .

The Carnegie Commission on the Future of Public Broadcasting was formed in June of 1977 to study the history and the current state of the public broadcasting system, and to make recommendations to aid its future development. Funded entirely by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Commission is independent of the existing institutions of public broadcasting, the government and organized public interest groups. The Commission has heard public testimony from more than two hundred people in public meetings held all over the country, and has contacted several thousand people on a less formal basis. The decisions of the Commissioners, distinguished people active in public policy, the arts, education, science, business and labor, were released as part of a 400-page report, A Public Trust, published on January 30, 1979.

The Context of the Recommendations

The book, which is divided into ten chapters and seven appendices, presents specific recommendations, in seven areas: structure and national organization, funding, television programs and services, public radio, new communications technologies, learning and instruction, and public accountability. Underlying these principal recommendations is an analysis of public radio and television's turbulent first 12 years as a major national institution, and a perspective on a future that must not only remedy contradictions which have plagued the system, but which must also prepare the industry and the public for a rapidly changing technological and social environment-a new era for noncommercial, public telecommunications. In retrospect, what public broadcasting tried to invent was a truly radical idea: an instrument of mass communication that simultaneously respected the artistry of the individuals who create programs, the needs of the public who form the audience, and the forces that supply the resources.

While the Commission has come to believe after nearly 18 months of study, that public broadcasting has become a "national treasure unlike any other," it has reluctantly concluded that the present arrangement of public broadcasting's financial, organizational and creative structure is fundamentally flawed.

This proposal is an attempt to balance the manifold pressures within and upon an institution of critical national importance, in order to provide the public with almost universal access to a system that can sustain the highest degree of creative excellence, courageous journalism, and a wide diversity of program style and subject unavailable through commercial sources. Public broadcasting's work must set a standard of excellence. This goal becomes doubly important as the means for delivering programs are altered by new technological developments.

Another preeminent principle in the report is the need to construct an institution that is independent and insulated from partisan influence, while maintaining fiscal accountability for the increasing amounts of public funds necessary to maintain a first-rate public telecommunications system. Such an institution must provide incentives for strong local service, superior national and regional programming efforts, and more pioneering uses of the media which can change the face of the entire industry. The Commission believes this is possible only by assuring that the American creative artist, journalist and communicator, whether inside or outside the present system, be given substantial support and freedom to develop new programs.

Finally, the Commission has constructed a plan that rests upon the fundamental unit of the present system—the local broadcasting station—whose community support and financial resources have made possible the remarkable growth and achievements of the system to date. While recognizing that the "public telecommunications system" will necessarily change, the Commission has placed principal faith and responsibility in the licensees as prime agents in this evolving future and as major forces for public service, education, and entertainment.

The Commission recommends that the system be fundamentally restructured and reorganized. The principal elements are:

1. The Public Telecommunications Trust. For a variety of reasons, the Commission believes that the existing statutory organization, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), has been unable to fulfill the need for effective leadership of the public broadcasting system and recommends that CPB be replaced by a new entity called the Public Telecommunications Trust. The Trust, a non-governmental, nonprofit corporation, is to be the principal, consolidated fiduciary agent for the entire system and all of its components, disbursing federal funds to stations for operations and facilities expansion, as well as setting goals for the system and helping to evaluate performance. In addition, the Trust will supervise a wide range of leadership, long-range planning and system development activities in radio, television and newer dissemination technologies. One of the primary responsibilities of the Public Telecommunications Trust will be to provide the system with protection from inappropriate internal and external interference in the sensitive area of program making.

The Trust will also be charged with the responsibility of administering activities designed to improve the system's service to the public, especially as the effects of social and technological changes are felt in the 1980s. Included among these responsibilities are expansion of facilities and signal coverage, broadening of station involvement with minorities and women, improvement of employment opportunities, development of sophisticated training programs, establishment of accountability criteria for federal funds and administration of informational and research activities.

The Public Telecommunications Trust will be governed by nine presidentially appointed trustees with staggered, nonrenewable, nine-year terms. The Commission recommends that the President make his selections from a list of names presented to him by a panel of distinguished Americans, chaired by the Librarian of Congress, and drawn from governmental institutions devoted to the arts, sciences, the humanities, and the preservation of our heritage. In addition, in order to involve the public telecommunications system in this process, the panel would include two representatives drawn from the system.

This new organization is called a Trust and its board members Trustees to underscore the conviction that the nine people who guide the course of the noncommercial telecommunications field in the next decade hold a trust for both the people working within the system and the public that benefits from its services.

2. The Program Services Endowment. Housed within the overall fiscal umbrella of the Trust is a second statutory institution, the Program Services Endowment, a highly insulated, semi-autonomous division whose exclusive function is to foster and support creative excellence in the communications arts.

The Endowment will underwrite a broad variety of television and radio production and program services, including public affairs and journalism—which the Commission considers the top priority—drama and comedy, educational and learning research and programming, new applications of telecommunications technology, experimental and untried programs, minority programs and other initiatives undertaken at its own discretion. While stations under our plan will receive a substantial increase in their own funds that will be available to plan and produce a full program schedule, the Commission feels that an indispensable component of any reorganized public broadcasting system is the creation of a catalyst for more innovative, riskier, and longer-range program development. Without the establishment of the Endowment, the Commission is reluctant to recommend the remainder of the proposal, which the Endowment is designed to balance. The Endowment is designed to stimulate domestic creative program production—both from independent and public station sources—and to provide noncommercial programming vision during a period of substantial change in the distribution of television and radio.

The Endowment will be governed by 15 directors, who will serve three year terms, renewable once. Three members of the board must be from the public telecommunications community. The directors will be chosen by the board of the Public Telecommunications Trust, from nominees put forth by the Endowment board itself. The first board of directors will be elected by the Trust board as well, but from nominees identified by the same nominating panel which prepares the lists for the Trust board. The chief executive officer of the Endowment, who will be given much discretion by the board, will serve under the terms of a five year contract, renewable once.

3. Stations and their organizations. Providing funds and insulation for existing and newly developing broadcast stations is a principal reason for the existence of the nongovernmental institution called the Public Telecommunications Trust. Under the terms of an altered matching formula, federal funds will be provided on an almost automatic basis by the Trust to eligible stations. In addition, major new programming support will be provided by the Program Services Endowment to the public stations and other producers.

The expanded discretionary funds and increased national programming and services available centrally to the various stations is, however, only one aspect of the proposal. The Commission believes that each station should continue to serve local communities according to priorities established in each community. To that end, our matching formula provides incentives for local service and local giving.

In television, the increase in federal discretionary funds should have a dramatic impact on the ability of stations to finance substantial new programming, developed jointly by the stations in national, regional, and special-interest consortia. The development of the multi-channel satellite for program distribution makes this opportunity for diversity an immediate reality.

In radio, the impact of the Commission proposal will be even greater because it will enable the number of stations to more than double by 1985. While the Commission foresees that the present major national station organizations—both for television as well as for radio—will continue to grow and provide vital services, we also expect additional activities to be performed by other more-than-local groupings of stations in the future.

Whatever decisions the stations make regarding their collective needs, the Commission strongly urges that real authority and significant funds be concentrated at organizations that will provide more effective, rapid, and professional decision-making. This is particularly critical in the planning and production of programs for national use.

While the proposal strongly argues against the imposition of a centralized national network in the commercial style, the Commission strongly believes that many decisions can be delegated without constant committee review by every station.

Financing the System

The Commission has based its recommendations for the funding of the system around three basic concepts: First, the system has always been underfinanced. Inadequate funding has caused much system disharmony, has forced it to abandon or never undertake many important production activities, and has resulted in an unhealthy reliance on direct program grants from outsiders. Unless the system is adequately supported financially, it will continue, in spite of its own best efforts, to be weak. Second, a self-directed editorial medium must never come to be dominated by one major source of funds. The Commission bases its recommendations for the funding structure on the notion that all contributors should be welcome to support public broadcasting, provided they follow a strict set of guidelines for appropriate grant-making. The best insulation from funder control comes from a balanced diversity of funders. Third, the most insulated and appropriate control of system activities should be local. Hence the bulk of the money in the system should be raised and spent locally, by the stations, and the design of the funding structure recognizes and encourages this.

The Commission recommends general revenues as the principal source of federal funds for public telecommunications and the establishment of a fee on licensed users of the spectrum, with the income from this fee used to offset in part the increased requirement for general tax revenues.

This carefully balanced funding arrangement has been designed to accomplish two essential objectives: to provide nearly automatic support from the federal government, free to the maximum extent possible from partisan politics; and to ensure the industry adequate levels of support generated from a variety of sources, but fatally dependent on none of them.

Special components of the system

Once a new financial and organizational structure has been established the Commission believes that a number of special objectives must be met jointly by all components of the system—by the Trust, the Endowment, and the station-based system. Chapters V through IX offer discussion and recommendations in these special areas:

Television programs and services. As a part of a much larger commercial television sector, public television's program-making capability is challenged by many of the same economic forces: the high cost of production, the need for long-range planning, the difficulty of determining priorities. Since the basic public television facility is largely completed, the primary objective of the system must be to rationalize a complicated, frustrating, and often unfair program production process that has plagued the system and limited its originality and innovation.

The Commission recommends two sources for this up- surge in new television production. A large proportion of the increased funds to stations should go toward the financing of new programs for regional and national use-- stations must aggregate their funds, delegate authority, and find ways to venture into more creative programming. In an effort to underscore this priority, the Commission, recommends that federal discretionary funds to stations be called Program Service Grants.

The establishment of the new Program Services Endowment is an indispensable supplement to station-financed program efforts. The Endowment will support programs by a broad range of American talent, including independent producers, working in many styles and genres. It will focus on the development of untried or risky ventures, and will be free to experiment with a range of grant- making processes, utilizing peer-review panels and other techniques to advise management of funding decisions.

In addition, the Endowment will have within it several divisions that will specialize in activities like radio production, new applications of technology, educational and instructional research and production support, minority and specialized programming, and other program-related activities.

Public radio. The top priority for public radio is the addition of new outlets so that it fully serves the nation in both large and small communities. In addition, the existing and the new stations must have a solid financial and community support structure in order to provide a full public radio service.

Under the overall leadership of the Public Telecommunications Trust, the Commission foresees the development and activation of an additional 250 to 300 public radio stations. The addition of new stations will result in improved national coverage for the public radio system, greater diversity among licensees, and broader local programming choice in many markets through multiple outlets.

The Trust, in cooperation with other elements of the public radio system, will develop a strategy of system expansion that includes regulatory reform and a radio development program that will assist in upgrading existing stations, activating new stations, and purchasing commercial or underutilized noncommercial stations.

The Commission recommends that federal funds to public radio stations derived via our proposed matching formula be used for two purposes: improvement of local service and operations, and the financing by station consortiums of programming that transcends strictly local needs. The Program Services Endowment should support additional national radio programs, particularly new and innovative projects. The Endowment will also provide transitional support for the present National Public Radio programming services until such time as stations are able to aggregate funds to support programs of their choice.

Technology. In studying new telecommunications technology and public broadcasting's role within it, the Commission's goal has been to devise ways in which all the people can have equal access to the products of a stronger, more diverse and better developed system. The Commission

is convinced that it is essential for public broadcasting to have both the money and the flexibility necessary to enable it to chart its own course as it responds to this future.

To help the industry fulfill this responsibility, three recommendations have been made: That public broadcasting and government join together to bring public television and radio service to at least 90 percent of the population over the next five to seven years; that public broadcasting move rapidly to develop a stronger, integrated research and development capability so that it can use new technologies for the public good, and that public broadcasting adopt a broader and more flexible approach to the ways its programs and services are delivered to the public.

Education and learning. American public broadcasting had its origins in instructional radio and television. The Commission recommends that the industry recommit itself to providing programs and services that assist in the education of all Americans. Because education in America is primarily a local matter, the major responsibility for this effort rests with the stations.

Because the quality of American education is also a national concern, the Commission recommends that the Program Services Endowment initiate a major research effort to identify what radio and television can teach best, and to develop these capabilities. This is fundamental research, but the potential benefits of it for the entire society are immense.

The Program Services Endowment should assume a pivotal role in the creation of new instructional and educational programs. Consequently, the Endowment should finance and stimulate the development of high quality programs that both test and demonstrate the potential of telecommunications for learning. The Endowment, acting as a catalyst should allocate \$15 million per year for such research and demonstration programs on radio and television. This money might be used to fund several promising educational programs or series, or it could be used as a match for licensee money in coproduction efforts.

Public Accountability. Because public broadcasting and the emerging public telecommunications industry enjoy widespread public support, stations, which are the focal point for interaction between the institution and the public, must provide serious opportunities for individuals to participate in and understand the system. Mechanisms for public participation in station planning, and development should be continued and strengthened. These include greater commitment to equal employment opportunity, broadened access by minorities, public involvement in station governance, more complete financial disclosure and community ascertainment. These measures of public accountability should be devised so as to preserve the station's responsibility to maintain editorial freedom.

These methods, however, are not enough to provide stations with a systematic way to determine whether certain well-defined interests and needs of the public are being satisfied. The Commission presents a plan for the use of audience measurement data that will assist the public system in designing programs to meet a broad and diverse audience.

THE TELEVISION ESTABLISHMENT,,
THE INDEPENDENT PRODUCER, AND THE SEARCH FOR DIVERSITY
James Day
June 1979

We seek diversity.

That message seems clearly implicit in the title and theme chosen by the sponsors of this conference. The message also seems to suggest that if diversity is our goal, the means to the goal is the medium of public telecommunications -- and the independent producer is the chosen agent.

The prescription strikes me as a dangerous oversimplification, dangerous because it will lead us into believing we have solved the problem of programming diversity once we have reconciled the differences between the independents and the system. Not so.

We are dealing with not one but two problems: the first involves the means to achieve a wide range of program choices; the second is a matter of access and freedom of expression by those outside the public broadcasting establishment. They are different problems and must be dealt with separately.

Let us look first at diversity.

Of course we're all for it. Luckily, the term is sufficiently ambiguous to allow everyone to embrace it with complete safety, loaded as it is with the suggestion of positive values, promising the delights to be found in differences, and offering up a smorgasbord of infinite options from which to make our choices. One can hardly argue with the notion itself. America is a diverse society and proudly so. We don't need scholars to tell us that "the greater differences that abound in a society, the more interesting and attractive that society will be." [1]

Fair enough. But what meaning does diversity hold in the context of public broadcasting -- or public telecommunications, as the conference title has it?

Does it imply that we are obliged to serve the needs of a highly diverse society -- or merely to reflect society's diversity in our programming? There's a world of difference to the program executive. There are those who will read diversity to mean the free expression of the widest range of political and ideological thought. The less politically minded will see it as geographical diversity, casting the program-gathering net broadly enough to capture the flavors and accents of our regional differences -- or, at any rate, those that have survived the relentless forces of homogenization (of which television is the most pervasive). The practical-minded will see diversity as a demand for programming to suit every variety of need and taste, to serve not the one but the many separate and distinct audiences.

The ambiguity of the term is a trap for the public broadcaster, a trap because the pursuit of these alternate meanings can lead in different, and sometimes contrary, directions. To illustrate: plugging into our regional differences through the deliberate decentralization of national production, parcelling program funds out to various local stations, is not necessarily the best, or even an adequate, means of mirroring our cultural diversity, the rich mixture of ethnic, racial, and religious differences that abound in the country. For that matter, spreading production dollars across the American landscape may not even be the best way of plugging into our regional differences. A "Wall Street Week" from the Old Line state, or Washington political satire from upstate New York, are only two examples of opportunism and enterprise wrestling regionalism to the deck.

We need to choose, to set our priorities, to be more precise about what we want to achieve.

In the process, we need to challenge, perhaps to discard, the notion that program diversity imposes on public broadcasting the need to serve all the many discrete publics -- providing a little something for everyone. The notion itself rests on the false assumption that the public looks to the mass media to serve its many particular and specific needs. There is no evidence in communications, research to support the contention that the public wants this kind of diversity in its media, or the expectation that if we supply it they will be magically changed and "uplifted" as a consequence. The public looks to

radio and television primarily for entertainment and information. The public's more specific needs are served by other than the mass media.

This position has been persuasively argued by a scholar of the media writing in the Journal of Communication. "There is nothing," he writes, "absolute or sacred about diversity, per se, certainly as it pertains to mass communications." In asserting that no single mass communications medium should attempt to be functionally equivalent to all other institutions serving the artistic, informational, and entertainment needs of all possible publics, he writes:

"It is difficult to see how forcing one institution into serving all sub-populations simultaneously is ameliorative in any sense of the term. Rather it would appear that if diversity is to be encouraged, it should be supported across institutions to keep them separate, specialized, and serving the diverse needs of our society." [2]

If the meaning of program diversity is not to be found in serving specialized audiences, what does it mean?

It means choices, but choices within a larger concern for the need for excellence, since excellence must be the first and most important consideration in all that public broadcasting does, the foundation on which the programming structure is built, as the recent Carnegie Commission study emphasized. Within the bounds of excellence will be offered the widest possible range of program matter, choices. The best because it is the best. Not for special audiences but for everyone/those who demand the best and those who will come to know and want the best once given the opportunity to experience it.

Some believe diversity in programming can be achieved by obtaining programs from diverse sources, particularly by opening the system to easier access by the community of independent film and video makers. I mean to speak of those artists who work alone or in small groups, consistently showing more enterprise than overhead, and who work outside the system for whatever reason. There are powerful reasons why the system should be opened wider to independent production, but I do not believe the search for diversity is one of them. There is nothing in our experience to guarantee that programs from diverse sources will be more varied in form and content than those produced by institutions. And while, as Sir Huw Wheldon pointed out to the Carnegie Commission, programs are made by individuals, there are instances when the support of an institution is essential because of the complexity and scale of the production: a "Great American Dream Machine," an "Upstairs, Downstairs," or the extended coverage of the Watergate hearings. Public broadcasting needs both the institutional production and the independent production, but it must have ultimate control over some part of its own production; it cannot be left to chance and the luck of the draw. Diversity is the product of careful planning. It must be ordered, ordered in the same sense that a concert is ordered. And this cannot be left to committees.

In fact, committees are the bane of public broadcasting - a barrier to creativity, and the worst possible way to achieve the diversity we seek. A committee cannot create diversity. It is a contradiction in terms: a committee is a means of dealing with diversity -- and reducing it to an acceptable consensus through accommodation and compromise. It is appropriate to self-government. It is wholly inappropriate to a journalistic or an artistic enterprise, and public broadcasting is both. It must look to other journalistic and artistic enterprises and not to government for its models. They will discover these organizations to be largely hierarchical, perhaps even autocratic. Some one person is in charge and clearly responsible for the decisions that are made. Carnegie II recognized the cancerous effects of consensus programming and recommended the creation of a Program Services Endowment, headed by an executive with authority to make program funding decisions. It was a bold recommendation in today's climate of consensus

programming democratically arrived at. But even they suffered a failure of nerve when pressed to the wall: the program executive, they hasten to point out, is not to be a "programming czar." [3] Apparently one man's "programming czar" is another man's editor-in-chief. One is to be shunned, the other is absolutely essential. Every journalistic enterprise has one, by whatever title: the Director General of the BBC bears also the title of editor-in-chief. They know where the buck stops.

In this connection, let me refer once again to the Carnegie Commission's recommendations for solving public television's need for more national programming of stature and excellence. The creation of an entity within the system "with the exclusive mission of supporting the creative activity necessary for better programming services" [4] is a proper and needed step. But it falls short of what is needed to achieve and sustain a national program schedule of diversity and excellence. To foster creativity, as the Program Services Endowment is apparently designed to do, is the kind of function that belongs with a foundation, not with the leadership organization of public broadcasting. There is more to broadcasting than creating programs. There is the need to create a broadcast service -- and that implies an organizing principle around which program schedules are built, a matter that cannot be left to chance and the competitive scramble for available production dollars. It also requires a governing intelligence daring to risk, willing to put faith and confidence in the individual artist (whether inside or outside the system), and ready to accept responsibility for the decisions that are made and the occasional mistakes that risk-taking entails.

In short, the need is for an editor-in-chief with responsibility not only for funding programs, but for shaping a program service that draws upon the best our creative community can provide, offering viewers the widest possible range of choices.

It would be nice to be democratic about this. We cannot have it both ways: we must decide which is the more important, the structure or the product. In recent years far too much attention has been lavished upon the structure and too little on what the structure is intended to produce. We need only to agree on what belongs on the face of the tube to decide what kind of structure can most effectively and economically produce the desired result. If program diversity is the objective, it is foolish to build a structure that can only result in consensus programming. We have that now. It's called PBS.

There is another facet to this matter of program diversity, and the problem of access for independent producers -- and they are linked.

One of the barriers the independent producer experiences as he seeks access to the system is inherent in a structure in which each of the PBS stations is a potential, if not actual, producer of national programs. It is a situation that creates inevitable tensions between the independents and the stations. On the one hand, the independents need the station as an entry point into the system. But the station has an earlier claim upon available production funds -- to keep its own producers working, its studios fully utilized, and its overhead amortized out of production grants, particularly where stations have made heavy investments in capital equipment in the expectation of producing national programming.

The rationale for station-based national production was not the exclusion of the independent -- though it has worked in that direction -- but rather to produce a diversified national schedule. In this it has largely failed. It has failed because competition for available production funds has resulted in stations racing through the same corporate and endowment doors, chasing after the same dollars. Too often the dollars have chosen the programs. Inevitably, the programs are no more diverse than the sources of funding. The scramble for production dollars is competition gone amuck, resulting in a squandering of time, money and creative energy on staff and services that are duplicated in a dozen places, piling overhead on overhead in a system that needs every dollar it can get for programs.

There are sound reasons for localism and local control of public broadcasting. But localism has little or nothing to do with programming for a national audience. The primary function of a local station is to meet local programming needs. Ironically, since program production has been decentralized the amount of local programming has dropped. If we are determined upon quality and diversity in our national program service, we would be well advised to abandon the present system of station-based production centers, relying instead upon separate production centers -- several in number (the recommendation of the earlier Carnegie Commission, but ignored by Congress), possibly with distinct specialities and competencies -- whose sole function would be the production of the highest quality programming for the national service. Several models are at hand: the Childrens Television Workshop, the now defunct NPACT, and the newly-created science group in Cambridge. The production centers would own no studios, leasing them as needed from stations or other vendors, thus avoiding the economic pitfalls of the present system. Each center would build up an expertise through repeated experience that now is generally lacking, avoiding the absurdity of three different production entities attempting to match the quality of BBC historical drama, and all falling short for lack of experience: each produced only one and may never have the opportunity of trying another.

The work of the several production centers -- as well as the work of independent producers -- would be coordinated through a highly experienced and tested program staff under the leadership of an editor-in-chief (by whatever title), with the staff, the editor-in-chief would have the power to fund, commission, coordinate, acquire, whatever would be required to assemble a national program service that would offer the widest range of choices to public television's audience.

Such a system would not find favor with everyone. The faint-hearted will find it too risky. Stations -- or some, at least -- will see it as a threat to their autonomy. And those who feel that the only good decisions are those in which they had a hand will find it arbitrary. I believe the independent will benefit -- and not only by knowing at last where to go for a decision, and getting one without the constant waffling, infinite delays, and bureaucratic shuttlecocking.

But if anyone stands to benefit from a system capable of delivering programs of sustained quality and diversity, it is the viewer. After all, it's his money we're spending. He deserves the best the system can provide.

NOTES

1. Harold Mendelsohn, "Diversity in Broadcasting: Social Need or Sacred Cow -- A Sociological Perspective" in *Journal of Communication*, Vol 28, No 2 (Spring 1978).
2. *ibid*
3. Carnegie Commission on the Future of Public Broadcasting, "A Public Trust", Bantam Books, New York, 1979.
4. *ibid*

DREAMING WHILE MAKING ENDS MEET

Charles R. Allen

(c) 1979

Los Angeles, California

Dear Independent:

We "believe you to be the talented promise of our video future. We saw a glimpse of your potential before we blew up NET (National Educational Television). You demonstrated imaginative and entrepreneurial creativity during the two season life of PEL (Public Broadcasting Laboratory). We thought about you and made vague acknowledgements to your existence in Carnegie I. We've even talked to you at Arden House, Flaherty, HTPUT and other "slipped loop" conferences.

When we were appealing to our Congress for more funds, you intruded with your complaints. When Ms. Sheila and her Carnegie II friends accepted testimony, your voices became shrill. We have been asked embarrassing questions by the Honorable Lionel Van Deerling because of your noise. Your obscenities have caused others to broaden admission to our funding gardens. Presiding over CPB-3, nice Dr. Fleming is catching the same flu and that is discomfoting for us. We have fought hard for your freedoms. We've protected you from access to audience, and insulated you from money, dirty money. If we didn't you would't be independent anymore.

Fondly,
The Director Dullery,
for THE SYSTEM

Now that you've listened to my suspect, but not altogether fraudulent impression of the "not-so-great then" and "the-not-much-better now," let us assume, for this hour, that you are only tolerated. Further, that if you touch, connect, or become related to us you will, in our "Typhoid Mary" world, catch our diseases. You dream, dream, dream, while trying to make ends meet. You cut sausage with your tape and film editors in the shape of commercials and small miscellaneous outpourings. You fly here and there, aging, wrinkling and withering, trying to decide which posterior to kiss so that you will be lucky enough to receive half of what you need to shoot your film. Your car, house, tropical fish and family will be in debtor's peril as you borrow to shoot work print, fine cut and score your messages. At your own expense you fly to this or other northeastern cities so that foundation fops can tell you about your work and how it relates to northeastern wisdom. The "not-so-cheery then" and "inflation-ridden now."

What will you do? What can you do?

Inside the industry life seems to be somewhat the same, except we dream, dream, dream, and ends are met. We have our non-producing sloths too. Sloths are full of rhetoric, produce nothing, and cover it by playing "killer politics."

There is a small cut of your band that is highly productive. It's an ever-changing group due to anorexia, alimony payments, repossessed Steenbecks, pock-marked tape stock, and other things that are the remnants of trying to produce.

Of the talented, energetic, and enthusiastic, some are with us here today. I won't embarrass the others who "schlepped" in. And of the talented and terrific there are some I've been very pleased, if not honored, to have worked or schemed with from the station under the Hollywood sign. Those

associates have produced some interesting programs, great films, and noble "almost-made-its."

KCET is part of the Los Angeles information flow. We are the sole source for nothing, but we add to the diversity of information, enlightenment, and entertainment realized through the software we produce, co-produce, co-finance, and then transport to people via Channel 28's transmitter...PBS, cable networks, and to the world, via distribution arrangements with Polytel International.

Our productions destined for PBS and those which go traveling beyond are produced in association with independents. That is highly satisfactory. Some of our project associated producers use creative, efficient methods, and we have been the better for it. Some are well known and obvious. Others prefer to work in smaller configurations. It guarantees diversity of creative approach, burning energies of the entrepreneur who wants to produce again, and a smaller KCET core staff. It means we don't need a hotel to staff large numbers on our pleasant 5-acre "television ranch" in Los Angeles.

If we have problems with independents, it is usually a result of our inability to articulate our program directions. We now know the kinds of programs we are interested in being associated with and are launching several major efforts to develop new kinds of information software. To this end we seek, and have just concluded, a global arts conference. We asked a group of international museum curators to identify those films which were successful, first as television, but continue to have useful life as instructional informational instruments. The makers of those films and tapes were invited to talk with us for three days, in a comfortable setting, about common pitfalls and failures. Only the experienced and successful can talk comfortably about problems that stalk the best works. Most of our guests were independents. Many were affiliated producers who wanted to become independents, but who had a certain disdain for "cutting sausage" to pay rent. Because we had our own funds for this activity we did not have to invite favorite grantees from other branches of the National Endowment for the Humanities or suggested Inhumanists, or similar creatures. We were enriched by the experience and had a chance to meet many independents previously known to us solely by their credits.

Locally, we have fared less well because of collective bargaining and other labor contracts. These permit limited, "hands on" associations. Beyond the jurisdictional line our associations are of a "your hands 'n' shop" nature.

The bulk of independents who enter our life through the unsolicited transom offer little. Typically, most offerings will divide into two piles. That which was on television in the recent past, and trend films. This year's trend was death and dying. The death of a friend or relative is a significant and disturbing event in anyone's life. This year tape and film seemed to record and reveal numerous dying relatives, over 67, and of origins other than the United States.

My program executive, for this activity, tried to leap out our basement window because of depression. Currently I'm seeking a re-training grant because he will be a decent funeral director.

Last year, it was two-dimensional, simpy and sophomoric films about handicapped persons which were demeaning and joyless. We couldn't afford John Korty's DeBolt Family, which I admired very much, but did manage to obtain Gravity is My Enemy, which was hauntingly effective.

I'm proud and pleased that KCET schemed and produced with TVTV, and on May 6th schemed and cheered de Martino, Spencer and the folks of USER, INC. on to make independent access to the CPB-leased and PBS-managed transponders

of Westar I. It wasn't easy for them and now they have some idea of what station "glue" really does to your spirit. But it was a hell of a good show, and in my opinion, NUCLEAR POWER: THE PUBLIC REACTION, showed this great country doing its business in an unparalleled presentation of diverse points of view. It was human political theater. It was sincere, serious, at times irreverent, and very healthy. Had it been a co-production with KCET, I would have crunched their freedom by striking the colon from the title. De Martino guarded their freedom and pointed out that without the colon no station would carry the show. But with our blazing call letters, a golden KCET on a field of puffy, radiation-charged billowy clouds, against a pre-smog sky, it would have been a "system program." Would more stations have taken the program live, or at all, had KCET provided its "banner 'n' benchmark," take it from the distributors of PLUTONIUM: .ELEMENT OF RISK -- probably not.

That PBS was highly cooperative in facilitating USER, INC.'s satellite transmission and moving necessary operational information to stations, indicates that they have achieved new flexibilities, attitudes, and are to be thanked.

That no station in the Maryland, Washington D.C., or other nearby areas carried it live was what missed opportunity is about. In some cities you had to wait until Monday at 12:00 AM. But it was accomplished. A door opened. If others fail to follow, that door could close.

Freedom is maintained, kept healthy and interesting, by a national information flow that is highly diverse. The more points of view, the better. I've never found an issue yet that had but two points of view. This country's real fabric is woven of those overlapping and varying shades of opinion on various sides of all issues. "Broadcasters" are terrified of that sort of television, and the fairness doctrine is their best friend.

KCET may seem less responsible than its station cousins. Perhaps we make our choices differently because of "tinselitis" or our numerous faults; as in San Andreas. We no longer think of ourselves as broadcasters, but rather as the operators of an information source which adds to the Southern California information flow. It makes the station special and removes it a bit from "our fellow narrow-casters." Our objective is to reduce our dependence on tired forms that belong to our past. Form in television is a filter that at once strains both content and interest.

Existing methods of funding independent projects are limited and lacking in sufficient funding. I would like to see the WNET Lab receive more money from CPB and WNET itself. Global Village has a plan that also should be funded. Diversity in funding and methods of distribution will expand opportunities for producers, distributors, stations and viewers. This is a healthier and higher goal. And, something else is needed, and I leave you with this hastily drawn model that I would like to see you improve upon so that it could be considered by the CPB President, Dr. Fleming, and his staff at CPB-3.

According to his agency's newsletter, he is searching for a program czar or czarina to preside over a new funding scheme which to some extent implements some of the Carnegie II "grocery list" of suggestions.

I would like to see five million dollars placed in a fund for independent producers. The fund would be accountable to CFB for auditing purposes, but would have a different structure and would be located in a town that pleases you, so long as it is west of Chicago. This would achieve geographic diversity of funding. I would also like to see the fund be able to receive extra funding through matching non-Federal dollars.

A responsible board with open meetings, an advisory committee, a form of national needs assessment and a small staff would do nicely. Needs

assessments and ascertainties are important factors in decision making. Private visions on film and tape should be funded by agencies which like to do that sort of thing.

By a process of your own choosing, funding awards would be made, contracted for, produced and accounted for to the Fund. All work would be given a first chance "play or pass" offering to PBS. A pass verdict would make it available to any other means of distribution except in those instances, and we need more, where the program vehicle is designed for cable or other distribution systems.

Imaginative contract officers would be a must. -Independents deserve to enjoy most of their project's ancillary income in exchange for a job well done. And, of course, that means they get the overruns, too.

Some stations will still want to deal with you and all should. Your numbers, of just the talented, suggested that the Fund cannot handle all of the opportunities that you collectively represent.

Having gotten a grant from the Fund, hopefully with "points" in hand, you could seek additional funding or cash flow loans from a public station, Home Box Office, Showtime, or other sources to come, or the studios if you are making something that has theatrical potential.

But you must create, design and sell to CPB the system you want. If you don't, others will, and you may be standing in line behind the crowd from "commerch." They should not be kept totally away, for any system that bars talent bears a resemblance to the current dullery. And when you bar talent your walls too will deserve to be caved in or blown away.

And if you leave it to the system to define your relationship with Federal or other bucks, remember this well. You will catch this system's politically stultifying diseases which are antithetical to the creative process. You will be chained by gods of dullery and punished in the horror chambers of the dreaded SPC (Station Program Cooperative). The croupiers of overhead will scrape your grants. You will be tolerated, but nothing will change. Dream, dream, dream - while trying to make ends meet.

We are in a magic moment caused by three conditions:

1. Imaginative regulation.
2. Less traditional funding patterns suggested by CPB and NTIA which want to fund counter-obvious telecommunications activities
3. Accelerated introduction of new production and distribution technologies.

If you squabble and quarrel like so many noisy truants, you will miss this exciting moment born of the ashes of dullery of what we have on screen now. The dividend can be yours. If you fail to take full advantage, you richly deserve to dream on whether you make ends meet or not.

Headed for "mark up" this summer is HR 3333 a.k.a. THE COMMUNICATIONS ACT of 1979. The notion that any of us should produce at the highly restricted pleasures of the 1934 is a rude, cynical joke - useful only to those who factor profits. It is to me only chains that deny opportunities on the assumption that the audience must be protected with hypnotic dullery: grovel!

HR 3333 looks good to me. So long as non-commercial telecommunications entities, or whatever we must call ourselves to remain grant-worthy, are able to keep the funds in any "little club" the U.S. audience will be poorly served. Local programming will be frosting for a future cake that will never be served, and platinum plated transmitters will be common. Most of the public television stations now on the air should be given one last big grant designed to fully automate all functions, retire staff, end auctions, and leave local programming to the street wandering portapackers. It would be more interesting to watch

the life as it passes a live camera in a supermarket than to review the patronizing pastiche of what the "poor system" can only afford now. The bankruptcy is in imagination, energy, ingenuity; it has nothing to do with bucks.

The folks who put RF 3333 together know something that it has taken years to discover. Local programming is paper promised backed up by dullery meant to make Supertrain a relief. In public television the local programming performance has not risen with the Community Service Grants. It would appear that if that fund became drastically more generous, local programming of any worth could vanish totally.

This is not to say that there are not exceptions but note that they are not common to or necessarily found in the "big cities." Local programming is too often realized as a gratuitous pile of dull pomp offered to the Altars of Funding and Regulation as a "wink" to keep the money coming forever.

Nothing goes on forever but plastic plants and nuclear "hot rocks." The changes introduced in HR 3333 are designed to cause programs to be produced for people. FOR PEOPLE HAPPENS TO BE THE PUBLIC. Not little artistic one-way communications, and not an auction or fundraiser that is written off and averaged as local programming. HR 3333 doesn't say you can't have platinum transmitters, or 20 handheld Ickeegooey cameras or other technical junk. It simply redirects all who would apply for bucks to make programs for people. People. Why people? Because it is their money whether they choose to view or not. Station operators who want to spend whole careers flying to the big 9, little 6 annual meeting of drivelers, or be members of National Association of Easy Dullery, may continue in fine style playing old auction tapes.

The players are the producers and Dr. Fleming's program fund scheme appears to be a promising hope. HR 3333 is the laxative that introduces momentary cramps but, on the other side, is a better life for the tax paying viewer. It's time to quit conferencing for a living, and time to produce for people. Don't sit there, do something. Your tears won't cause your dreams to be realized at 24 frames per second, or to leap from your newer technologies to dance down 525 lines to entertain, inform or enlighten people. I respectfully ask you to rise to the opportunity.

"The Case for a Center for Independent Television"

A paper by Nick DeMartino

Presented June 6, 1979 Co

"Independent Television Makers and

Public Communications Policy:

A Seminar-Conference to Promote

Telecommunications for Diversity

in the 1980's"

Sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation Arts Program

As many of you know, I am an independent producer and media activist who has, for the past 18 months, worked as a consultant and writer for the Carnegie Commission on the Future of Public Broadcasting. I helped draft the report, as well as to prepare a series of background papers for the Commissioners, principally in the areas of program funding and organization. The first paper I wrote, which was just published in full by Televisions magazine, sketched the history of independent producers and the public television system. The principal recommendation of that paper, which was summarized in the full Carnegie report, was the establishment of a new institution called The Center for Independent Television, to be funded by the proposed Program Services Endowment.

Because the reference to this idea was so brief in the text itself, the notion has received mixed reviews within the independent community, and has largely been overlooked by public television, since it is so deeply involved in structural overhaul of the entire system. So, today I would like to briefly amplify the concept, and propose somewhat different funding, governance, and mission for this Center for Independent Television. This elaboration is merely a point for us to begin our discussion, and in no way represents the views of the Carnegie Commission or its staff. Instead, it is the result of my own thinking, discussions with other independents, an examination of the new Rewrite of the Communications Act of 1934, and the ferment within the public television system which is currently under way.

To quote from the Carnegie Report, pages 168-169:

"In recent years the system has heard complaints by independent producers about lack of access and attention. We have heard them. The goal of bringing new talent into the broadcast system requires the creation of formats balanced between the differing needs of producers and stations. The Endowment might finance a Center for Independent Television, whose job would be to develop broadcast formats that can take advantage of the range of talent among independent producers. This Center would develop contacts with the full range of independents, and provide a WATS telephone number for easy communication. The Center's mission would include the establishment of fair selection procedures, financing, support in understanding the system, rights negotiations, and a variety of related services for and communications with independent producers in both radio and television."

This paragraph doesn't really express the point of creating yet another bureaucracy. As I wrote in the earlier paper: "While certainly the ombudsman function would be part of this, as would the function of helping to make 'the system' more understandable to a wider range of producers, the primary function of such a Center for Independent Television would be to help increase the market share of producers, working outside other production entities....The greatest contribution of this Center would be to act as a legitimatizing agent for the role of independents within the system. We now face the irony that virtually every PTV organization pays lip service to independents and yet the number of original hours of programs which are financed by the system and aired on PBS remain miniscule today."

Since I wrote that more than two years ago, we have seen remarkable progress by independents in the political realm. The 1978 Public Telecommunications Financing Act included provisions aimed at increasing CPB's financing of independent work, and reserved some use of public television's satellite for non-station distribution of programming. The legislation and other lobbying efforts have led to two planning grants by CPB for series specifically formatting independent productions and production aid. Single producers and series producers, including many of us here in the room, continue to develop programs for the broadcast schedules of local stations and the PBS national feed. The Interregional Council on Public Television Policy, a group of powerful public television station managers, established a committee on programming access headed by Frederick Breitenfeld of Maryland. That group has recommended a clearinghouse or broker for independents to be housed within the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. All of these and other developments are occurring against the backdrop of Carnegie, Rewrite, and the industry's own plans for reorganizing PBS and CPB.

This frenzy of communications policy activity is one of two important historical facts which have convinced me that the idea for the Center for Independent Television is even more necessary today than it was two years ago when I first proposed it to the Carnegie Commission.

I shall return to the policy arena in a moment. But first, I want to discuss the impact of new communications technology, particularly the satellite, on this whole question. In 1967, before there was a PBS, a CPB, and many of today's PTV stations, the Ford Foundation put together the first live public television television interconnection. It took a long time to do, it was expensive, and, because it included controversial public affairs material, the Public Broadcasting Laboratory was hotly debated among the stations carrying it Sunday nights.

On May 6, 1979, at least 15 public television stations carried a three-hour live broadcast of an anti-nuclear demonstration on coast-to-coast television produced by Public Interest Video Network, a group of independents and journalists, that didn't exist two weeks earlier. The transmission via public television's transponders on Westar I cost less than \$2,000. The overall production, admittedly based on lots of volunteer labor, cost about \$30,000. The program, containing controversial public affairs material, was broadcast live by stations who pre-empted regular programs and had no assurances from PBS about our content.

For those of us independents who made it happen--principally Kirn Spencer, Larry Kirkman, and Victoria Costello in Washington--it was a landmark, not to mention an extraordinary experience. The ratings were good, the stations were happy, the program well reviewed. We believe our production opens the way for additional producers to deal with live programs as a form--something that had been open heretofore only for networks or stations--but dramatically illustrates the shift of power within the public television system.

While both PBS operations and programming were extra-ordinarily cooperative, understand that they essentially were support staff for us to reach the bird in the sky. Our job was to create a program that was intriguing enough for the signal to go down to the stations. While I believe our program justified all the faith of the stations, it was a very gutsy thing for many of these executives. Most of them made decisions based upon faith in one or another of the producing team, especially Joe Russin and David Prowitt, who had both worked in public television for years. Or, they followed the lead of other station executives whose judgment they trusted.

The most difficult part of the work was the building of the network-- calling and wiring station managers. Our success would have been impossible if several of us had not invested enormous time earlier developing an understanding of how public TV decisions are made, who key decision-makers are, and how to get their attention. To my way of thinking, this is precisely the kind of function a Center for Independent Television would perform. Despite our hopes that PBS or CPB should provide this kind of assistance, I think it's naïve and illogical for them to meet all the needs and interests of producers. Yet, were it not for the accident of my employment at the Carnegie Commission and the location of the event and the principal producers in Washington, D.C., I don't believe we could have pulled it off. Had we been independents in Arizona trying to cover a major event live, would we have been able to do it? And, more importantly, why should we subsidize such administrative activities for those who most benefit?

Rapidly changing technology creates new opportunities, as we are all discovering. The next "ad-hoc" network independent producers create might be offered to both cable and public television. Such a challenge would require complex rights negotiations with unions, the cable distributor, PBS and/or stations in the public system, and international broadcasters. It would be wiser for us to develop such precedents and policies in the interests of a broad range of producers, not simply for the benefit of a single entrepreneur.

Before proposing some concrete details, I should return briefly to the issue of policy formation in the new communications environment. I think that many of us have learned as we organized just what policy means. Whether it is an elite group like the Carnegie Commission, the critically influential national columnists, key staff members and Congressional committee members, or various allies in the so-called public interest community, there are a vast array of pressure points that we have influenced. As the stakes in this process of policy formation escalate, however, we are discovering that independent producers as an interest group are fairly insignificant.

Our power is not our means^ but our ends. Ultimately, our efforts are grounded in the conviction that structural change in the communications industry is desirable for content purposes--better programs, more points of view, and healthier and more diverse ways of communicating. That is a political perspective that can only be supported by the general public once programs reach the air (or cable, as the case may be). Hence, we get mired in seemingly endless conferences, meetings and committees--trapped by the preeminent need for administration, and pulled away from the process of making programs and thinking about content. I don't want to have to re-invent the wheel every time I raise money for a program and try to get it broadcast. I suspect neither do most of you in this room.

These and many other functions, I believe, could appropriately be lodged with an organization that acted on behalf of independents, were it structured properly. I know, for instance, that we should have had a representative involved in the preparations for the World Administrative Radio Conference. I would have liked to see independent producers invited as a bona fide representative at the public TV "Round Robins," or the meetings that led to the new satellite access policy. As a Carnegie staff member, I have made the rubber chicken and peas circuit, and I know quite well that we aren't now part of the process within the system, much less in the larger arena.

Despite this fact, we've done fairly well, largely because of the efforts of individuals, and of groups like AIVF. But it is hard to sustain, and, as we enter a new phase of development, we are in danger of being divided and conquered.

The precise functions of the Center for Independent Television – or another name, it doesn't really matter—would be a matter for continuing debate. Certainly an ombudsman role is vital. So is monitoring and information-gathering within the system and the development of rapid decision-making procedures with stations, PBS, CPB, and other elements of the PTV system. I don't think the group should either produce or lobby before Congress. Producers are this group's constituency.. Links between geographically dispersed producers and Congress should be separate, with this Center insulated from direct political involvement. This institution should be an independent nonprofit corporation, preferably located outside Washington, D.C., with a highly knowledgeable and skilled professional staff hired-by a governing board. I suspect the composition and selection of this board will be the most difficult issue for us to consider, second perhaps only to the sources of funds.

The board strikes at the heart of one of our greatest definitional problems: just who is an "independent" producer? No litmus test I know can solve this problem. A board must have certain skills, but cannot be isolated from the changing and evolving independent community. I would suggest an 11-member board, all elected by any "producer not working full time for a broadcast station, network, or cable operation who has had at least one program on a local public television station or on any PTV interconnection system during the previous calendar year. This constituency, if you will, would have to provide certification from the broadcast agency, and would be eligible to vote.

There would be ex-officio seats for two public television station producers (not managers) who would, like the other nine board members, run for office among the constituency. The chairperson would be elected annually by the board, who would each serve staggered three-year terms.

Funding for the Center for Independent Television should come from four sources: (1) Membership fees from the above mentioned constituents; (2) Contribution by market size from participating public television licensees and other organizations; (3) The Corporation for Public Broadcasting, who would give a multi-year block grant to this Center as an integral part of its obligations under the 1978 legislation; and (4) from private funds, contributions, donations, foundation grants, fund-raisers, etc.

This idea is more refined now than in its earlier forms, and I expect that debate among us will determine in short order whether producers and the system feel the necessity for a Center for Independent Television. The objective is, put simply, to give us the power to intervene on both the policy and the program planning levels within a rapidly changing technological and political environment. British scholar and writer Raymond Williams, in examining television in America and Britain, offers a conclusion that illuminates this point:

"For many years yet, central programming and networking authorities are going to continue. They must become or continue as public authorities expressing the concept of the airwaves as public property. But it would be wise to look again at the question which is still unresolved from the earliest days of broadcasting. the relation between transmission and production. In all current systems too few people are making the primary decisions about production. The real need is for more independent production companies, which would be given publicly protected contracts with the programming and networking authorities. It

would not be an easy system to devise and administer, but it is the only creative social course to take between the existing monopolies and their new challengers."*

* From Television: Technology and Cultural Reform, by Ramond Williams (New York, Schocken Books, 1974) p. 148-9. '

THE EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES AND THE NATION'S DEMOGRAPHICS:
Telecommunications Programming Opportunities
H. S. Dordick
M.I.T.

Introduction

There is, today, a remarkable confluence of emerging human needs for information and communication and the technologies to meet these needs. Whether society will benefit from this unusual occurrence depends on the existence of institutional structures that facilitate the convergence of the information provider's objectives, the needs of the target audiences, and the appropriate distribution modes. This paper examines the origins of the demand, the distribution technologies on the scene or soon to be available, and the parameters of institutions that hold promise for taking full advantage of the possibilities.

This nation is becoming increasingly diverse

The national demographics point to a society becoming increasingly fragmented. No longer do we glorify the national melting pot, rather we exalt ethnic, cultural, national, and even educational differences. Changing lifestyles, and emerging new lifestyles are clearly the wave of the future. There is a growing demand for these lifestyles and their values, to be reflected in the media.

In 1985, the population of the United States will approach 235 million, representing a population growth of less than one percent per year. Households, however, will expand at twice that rate because there will be more single person households, especially those with single men. Persons per household will decrease from about 2.92 persons at the present time to 2.64 in 1985. The median age will increase from 28.8 today to over 31 in 1985 and there will be a significant decline in the total number of teenagers. Sixty percent of all television viewers will be over 25 years of age and 50% of all women will be in the workforce. Educational levels will increase, we shall become an increasingly affluent society, suburban and non-metropolitan populations will increase while central cities decline. Much of the population increase will take place in the Sun Belt, variously defined as from Oregon and California through the Southwest to the South Eastern seaboard and up into Virginia.

There are tensions in our society that arise from the different values that define lifestyles. Traditional patterns of culture are being challenged, long ingrained beliefs reflected in our economic values, indeed, our devotion to capitalism, the free-enterprise system, individualism, are being brought into question. Religions are shaped not so much through links with the past as with attempts to adapt to the present and prepare for what is yet to come. Daniel Bell refers to these developments as the disjunction of realms.

"...one can discern the structural sources of tension in the society: between a social structure (primarily technoeconomic) which is bureaucratic and hierarchical; and a polity which believes, formally, in equality and participation; between a social structure that is organized fundamentally in terms of roles and specialization, and a culture which is concerned with the enhancement and fulfillment of the self and the 'whole' person. In these contradictions, one perceives many of the latent social conflicts that have been expressed ideologically as alienation, depersonalization, the attack on authority, and the like."

(The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism. Basic Books, Inc. N.Y., 1978)

The emerging post-industrial society is an information-based society

The balance of employment in the United States has shifted very dramatically in favor of the service industries. The service sector's share of the nation's total employment has grown from about 40% in 1929 to well over 60%

today. The shift from industrial to service employment in the United States, often characterized as the first indication of a post-industrial society, is dramatically dependent on the advancement of knowledge and the availability of information, broadly and equitably. Service industries are information industries; publishing, health care, welfare services, education, banking, government, transportation, communications, insurance, etc. etc. Economists have long struggled with a useful construct for dealing with information as a commodity with economic value. As yet their efforts have not borne significant fruit. But today, there are jobs, people, and industries buying and selling and trading information. There are businesses which, without equitable access to information would soon be unable to compete and would fall by the wayside. To an increasing degree, economic competition will depend on access to information.

These inescapable facts point to an information based society dependent upon equitable access to many channels of communications.

Available and emerging broadcast and non-broadcast distribution technologies are converting a climate of communications scarcity to one of plenty.

Advances in electronic technologies, the phenomenal growth of large scale and very large scale integration processing methods, the convergence of the computer and communications technologies have all created communications channels where heretofore it had been assumed there was a severe spectrum scarcity. Satellites leap-distances at costs lower than is possible with ground based wires or microwave links. And improved broadcast technologies and designs have opened new broadcast channels. A well known cable technology has been transformed into an information delivery system that competes with both broadcasting and the telephone but with the important and attractive feature of being capable of transmitting video information. Video-tape and video-disc systems are changing the old bicycling networks into national networks facilitated by the mails and potentially widespread tape and disc national sales organizations. More recently, innovative and imaginative use of auxiliary television signals have shown the extent to which the broadcast spectrum and the television receiver can be used for information retrieval system in electronic publishing.

There are, reportedly, over 500 receive-only earth stations scattered throughout the nation. The Public Broadcast Service with all of its public television and radio stations now equipped with earth stations provides the capability to establish broadcast networks as desired.

The PBS Satellite system can be viewed as a means for the creation of networks.

While there are, at the present time only 5 transmit earth stations in the PBS system. Western Union operates or plans to operate up-links in all major cities of the country. Conceivably, a Public Television Station could originate a signal for transmission via common carrier microwave or wire links to an available up-link for distribution via an ad hoc network it has established with other stations in the system who have subscribed to that particular network service.

Recently an official of RCA suggested the possibility of providing every television station in the nation with a receive only terminal at a total cost of less than \$20 million. With the addition of several transmit stations capable of reaching the RCA satellite yet another network building system is available. Clearly the prospects for ad hoc arrangements capable of distributing information to receiving stations who have subscribed for a particular

service are considerable. The next several years will see additional satellites in orbit, with the proliferation of earth stations developing additional prospects for networks that meet the specific objectives of information providers and their audiences.

The most effective use of satellite distribution systems require multiple local distribution channels.

Enhancing local distribution options through the development of additional broadcast as well as non-broadcast channels not only broadens the options for national program selection at the local broadcast or telecommunications facility but also offers additional distribution options for local programming. During the last ten or so years, improved broadcast equipment design as well as some innovative public policy decisions at the FCC have increased the number of television and radio channels available to a community. Recent rulings will shortly allow for a significant number of additional radio stations and 61 VHP "drop-ins" have been suggested to the FCC in order to increase the number of television stations available. Improved UHF standards as well as lower cost equipment may lead to the utilization of the almost 30% of the UHF licenses not now being held.

Instructional Television Fixed Services (ITFS), Multi-point Distribution Systems (MDS) and leased common carrier microwave or interconnect services are available for adding to the local distribution services. Cable Television has, it seems, broken the 20% saturation barrier with many formally marginal systems now doing well financially because of Pay-TV and the super-stations and can be expected to reach 35% saturation by the mid-80's. Finally, video-tape and video-disc systems have and will shortly reach the market, offering abundant terminals for both local and national "copy" telecommunications networks.

The distribution opportunities for the information providers-television makers or electronic publishers-are extensive and are growing.

There are many pipes that need titling. Research has shown that individuals seek information and media fulfillment via different distribution modes. To some extent, socio-economic status and ethnicity determine the channels accessed for the messages sought. This seems to imply that information providers may very well specialize in one or more distribution means depending on the audiences they seek to reach and the messages they wish to transfer. The technology is available to deal with information dissemination in that manner. Given the proper institutional structure, the costs could be reasonable and the access open.

However, research and experience has shown that the availability of distribution channels does not necessarily lead to diversity.

There is, however, one grand exception and that is the common carrier telephone system, the most interactive, ubiquitous and open network invented by our society and one that has probably had the most pervasive influence on our lives and very likely is most responsible for our continued respect for the First Amendment and the increasing demand for access to all of our media and telecommunications channels. While there is no "hard" evidence available, one observes that countries embarking on extensive investments in telephone expansion are experiencing increasing pressures for more access to radio and television. "Pirate" radio and television stations are, reportedly, springing up in France where major investments in their telephone infrastructure are being made.

The essential missing link is a structure that allows for freedom of access, unencumbered by prejudgments of audience reaction or critical response.

This structure must be prepared to deal with the concept of a common carrier information space, a common carrier approach to satellite transponders as well as local distribution links. If broadcasting-and, indeed, all forms of electronic information dissemination have access to numerous and essentially competing modes of distribution, is there any reason why the rules of print publishing cannot apply? Clearly without a fully switched system such as the telephone there will be an excess of demand over distribution supply and some form of time and space management protocol that will ensure access and the distribution to all voices must be developed. However, there are those who argue, with some justification, that in the not too distant future the broadband video system will be a switched system, thus paralleling the telephone infrastructure. If this is the direction in which technology is moving and if the demand for access to information continues to grow as it must in an information knowledge based society, it is, perhaps, not too early to experiment with the open access possibilities of common carrier policy for broadcasting. Curiously, this is reminiscent of AT&T's entrance into broadcasting. WEAF began broadcasting from the Long Lines building on Walker Street in New York City on July 25, 1922 with a plan to rent program time to anyone who wanted to use the facilities at \$40 or \$50 per fifteen minutes.

Conclusions

We have a unique opportunity to reexamine the institutional structure that has shaped our information environment. The demands for information via broadcast, narrowcast, via computer networks, indeed via all forms of electronic dissemination is exploding. Fortunately the technologies to meet these demands are also evolving. And there are strong indications that public telecommunications policy recognizes this significant moment in our history and is offering the opportunity for this reexamination and, possibly, restructuring.

There are numerous legal issues that must be addressed. The enormous investments that have been made in communications must be fairly dealt with, and the public must be heard. Up for grabs is the fundamental question not of who is in charge but whether anyone need be in charge other than to manage the facilities so that everything "works".

Here is an opportunity for a fresh look at just what it is we want from our telecommunications technologies. We need not be driven by them. Rather we should take charge and mold them to just what it is we want.

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PENDING LEGISLATION AND OTHER PROPOSALS DEALING WITH
THE INDEPENDENT TELEVISION MAKERS

by Henry Goldberg

Although the assigned topic is pending legislation and other proposals dealing with independent television makers, there are provisions in existing legislation -- particularly the Public Telecommunications Financing Act of 1978 -- that are at least equally important.

In the legislative hearings leading to passage of the 1978 Act, independent television producers convinced the Congress that legislation was needed to assure independent producers access to Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) program monies and to the interconnection system used to distribute programs to public television stations. For example, the Senate Report on the 1978 Financing Act states that:

The hearing record is replete with criticisms that public broadcasting is not open to the work of independent producers. Because the Committee does not believe it is possible to legislate creativity, the Committee resisted the notion of a specific set aside for independent producers of national programming. However, small producers deserve a more open marketplace for their product. It must be an important goal of public broadcasting to foster and support American talent and creativity.

Senate Report, p. 18. The Senate Report also notes that PBS' "combination of powers":

promotes a "closed system" in which independent producers may encounter substantial difficulties in securing the purchase or support of their programs, or national distribution of their programs, or both unless they offer their program through a PBS member station.

Senate Report, p. 21. Similarly, the House Report states that:

The problem [engendered by the "program funding bureaucracy"] is somewhat worse for the independent producer. Because the stations are the "backbone" of the system, and because they are "starved" for funds, there are few incentives for the system to pay for out-of-house production of programming. For this reason, independent producers have argued that they have been almost entirely excluded from public funding. This, despite the fact that they may be able to provide a better product at lower cost.

House Report, p. 33.

These Congressional concerns underlie the 1978 legislation, but also serve as the rationale for various pending proposals. The existing law and the pending proposals are outlined briefly below.

I. Public Telecommunications Financing Act of 1978.

A. CPB program funds.

The law authorizes CPB to make grants or contracts with independent producers and production entities for the production or acquisition of programs (§ 396(g)(2)(B)), and specifically directs that "a significant portion" of its funds be used for program production and, of those funds, "a substantial amount shall be reserved for distribution to independent producers and production entities . . .". (Section 396 (k)(3)(B)(i).) •

In explaining this provision, the House-Senate Conference Report states that:

In agreeing to the term "substantial amount" for independent producers, it is the conferees' intention to recognize the important contribution independent producers can make in innovative and creative new programming. By "independent producer" the conferees have in mind producers not affiliated with any public telecommunications entity and especially the smaller independent organizations and individuals who, while talented, may not yet have received national recognition. The talents of these producers have not been adequately utilized in the past. While setting aside a specific percentage of funds for this purpose would have removed discretion in the administration of the Corporation's funds, the conferees' fully expect the Corporation to take the necessary steps to increase the level of participation previously available to these smaller independent producers.

House-Senate Conference Report, p. 30.

B. Station program funds.

While the House subcommittee deleted earlier provisions that would have required stations to direct a "substantial amount" of their program funds to independent producers, the House Report makes clear that:

Even though this legislation does not require the stations to devote a substantial amount of their programming funds to independent producers, the committee strongly encourages the public broadcasting stations to provide them the fullest possible access consistent with their independent broadcasting judgment.

House Report, p. 13.

C. Access to interconnection system.

The 1978 Act provides that, if there is channel capacity of the public broadcasting satellite interconnection system remaining after usage by public telecommunications entities, such capacity:

shall be made available to other persons for the transmission of noncommercial educational and cultural programs and program information relating to such programs, to public telecommunications entities, at a charge or charges comparable to the charge or charges, if any, imposed upon a public telecommunications entity for the distribution of noncommercial educational and cultural programs to public telecommunications entities.

47 U.S.C. § 396(h)(2). The House Report explains that:
This provision is intended primarily to insure that entities other than public TV and radio stations (such entities include independent producers, university-based production centers, et cetera) will have access to unused capacity on the satellite interconnection systems' for public television and radio for the purpose of transmitting programming and related material directly to the stations.

House Report, p. 25.

11. NTIA Proposed Regulations.

The 1978 Financing Act also made changes in the Public Telecommunications Facilities Program (PTFP), which has been in existence since 1962 as a grant program supporting the construction of public broadcast facilities. The 1978 Act broadens the PTFP to make non-broadcast entities eligible for grants and to provide financial support for planning and for construction of non-broadcast facilities. Moreover, the Act shifts the administration of the PTFP from HEW to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), in the Department of Commerce.

Under regulations recently proposed by NTIA, non-profit tax-exempt production centers, such as media art centers, would be eligible for federal grant monies for planning, construction of facilities, and acquisition or lease of equipment. NTIA, however, has stated that an entity that is "exclusively a production center" and does not possess "the means of electronic distribution" of program services will not be eligible for grants. (44 Fed. Reg. 13262, 13263 (1979).) At this point, it is not clear how NTIA will interpret this requirement.

III. Carnegie Commission on the Future of Public Broadcasting.

The second Carnegie Commission, like the Congress, heard testimony from independent television producers to the effect that the present public broadcasting system is not sufficiently open to their programs. While not dealing specifically with this problem, the overall Carnegie proposal places great stress on the need to direct the bulk of federal monies in public broadcasting toward programming activities at the national and local levels.

Under the Carnegie proposal, a Public Telecommunications Trust would replace CPB. A Program Services Endowment would be established by federal statute as a "highly insulated, semi-autonomous" division of the Public Telecommunications Trust to be governed by a 15-member board appointed by the trustees of the Trust. The Carnegie Commission stated that the Endowment's funding activities should include support of "pilots, research production centers inside and outside the system for radio and television, individual program grants, national competitions and subsidies for existing programs." ("A Public Trust: The Report of the Carnegie Commission on the Future of Public Broadcasting," p. 164 (Bantam Books, April, 1979)).

Specifically, the Carnegie Commission referred to "complaints by independent producers about lack of access and attention." The Report states that the goal of bringing new talent into the broadcasting system:

requires the creation of formats balanced

between the differing needs of producers and stations. The Endowment might finance a Center for Independent Television, whose job would be to develop broadcast formats that can take advantage of the range of talent among independent producers. This Center would develop contacts with the full range of independents, and provide a WATS telephone number for easy communication. The Center's mission would include the establishment of fair selection procedures, financing, support in understanding the system, rights negotiations, and a variety of related services for and communications with independent producers in both radio and television.

Carnegie Report, pp. 168-69.

IV. H.R. 3333 -- House Communications Act "Rewrite."

The most comprehensive proposal to change the public broadcasting system, including that system's relationships with independent producers, is contained in H.R. 3333 -- the Communications Act "Rewrite" in the House of Representatives'. Title VI of the bill would create an Endowment for Program Development in place of CPB. The proposed legislation stresses Federal support for program production rather than "for station operating support and facilities construction. The Endowment would be funded under a permanent annual authorization equalling \$1.50 multiplied by the number of U.S. residents for the year. Governed by a nine-member board, three of whom to be Presidentially-appointed, the Endowment would have among its principal purposes the responsibility "to diversify the sources from which educational, informational, and cultural television and radio programs and services may be obtained for dissemination to the public." (Section 641 (a) (3).) The Endowment is authorized to provide financial assistance, in the form of grants and contracts, to:

Program production entities, including broadcast stations, national, regional and other systems of broadcast stations, independent producers and independent production entities, and others providing electronic mass media services. (Section 642(1).)

As required of CPB under the 1978 Financing Act, the Endowment is directed to reserve a "substantial amount" of its program funds "for distribution to independent producers and production entities for the production of programs," and to use panels of experts to evaluate program proposals. (Sections 643(c)(1) & (3).)

In a departure from both existing law and earlier "rewrite"

proposals, in referring to programming, the bill does not use the term "noncommercial" programs, recognizing that program distribution, rather than content, determines what is noncommercial. This recognition is related to another provision of H.R. 3333, which states that programs funded by the Endowment are available for commercial distribution following a one-year period during which public broadcasting stations have exclusive access to the programs (Section 644). After the year, the program rights revert to the producer, who may make the program available to any one, although the Endowment can negotiate to receive a percentage of the sub-

sequent revenues.

MIND POWER:
Collective Action
for
Media Reform

Presented to the Conference:
Television Makers and Public Communicat ions Policy
June 6, 1979
by
DeeDee Halleck

Historically, the independent media producer's political involvement has consisted of documenting the struggles and confrontations of other groups. Coal miners» auto workers, anti-war demonstrators, plutonium victims have all had their stories told by committed and supportive video and film makers. There has been relatively little attempt by independents to direct their energies to changing their own material position within the dominant media structures. If these structures were considered at all, it was to make use of them - garnering the airtime on the news with some Yippie-type action, or occasionally being allowed "access", either a one-time "airing" on PBS or perhaps served up smorgasbord-style with other independents and given a catchy, albeit patronizing title such as "Flick-Out" or "Up and Coming." Until recently there had been no attempt to analyze media policies, let alone counter them.

The activity of independents in the past two years has marked somewhat of a departure. Frustrated with the increasingly competitive and unresponsive structures of both PBS and the networks, independents have banded together to press their demands. These demands, however, are not just for access or more grant money. They are now addressing the issue of control of the system as a whole. This is a new fight and one that runs counter to a tradition of political impotence in the media field. This impotence has been maintained by a pervasive aura of technological determinism. American media theory has been dominated by a Janus-headed romanticism: two aspects of the same basic credo: the omnipotence of technology. On one hand we have a McLuhanesque romanticism that continues to permeate our culture: the belief that information, per se, is good, and that an increasingly complex technology always triumphs. While technological mystification has been dealt a severe blow with the Three Mile Island incident, it continues to run rampant in the communications field. This technological Darwinism is most recently evinced in Gene Youngblood's Utopian prognostications of a transponder future. [1] On the other side, just as romantic, but in a more pessimistic vein, are Jerry Mander [2] and the electronic Luddites. Back to nature: reality is pure: it is not transcribed, transmitted or televised. Electrons are to be exorcised in primal earthy rites. The saint of this sect is the San Diego woman who took out her gun one afternoon and shot her TV set. Their apostle and Sunday School teacher is Marie Winn, [3] who bewails what TV does to children, and is followed by troops of converted parents, whose families have been saved by pulling the plug on their sets.

While the woman with the gun probably had a better idea than McLuhan, both of these ideologies have the common aspect of seeing MEDIA as all, powerful and something beyond our control or responsibility. In spite of these fatalists, there is a budding hope that media change is possible. The involvement of the PTA with Peggy Charon's Action for Children's Television is a grass-roots movement with wide support and growing clout in Congress. Alliances of Blacks and Hispanics have challenged license renewals and have forced many stations into affirmative action programs. The Consumers Union and the United Church of Christ, through their huge constituencies have applied pressure on Congress and the FCC for major reforms. The AFL-CIO and other labor groups have recently issued telecommunications policy statements, and have begun to testify on media issues in Congress. The legislative work of the

1. Gene Youngblood, "The Mass Media and the Future of Desire," Coevolution Quarterly, Winter, 1977. P. 6-17. Also "Interview with Gene Youngblood," Videography, April, 1979
2. Jerry Mander, Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television William Morrow, N.Y. 1978.
3. Marie Winn, The Plug-In Drug, Viking, N.Y. 1977.

National Task Force on Public Television and the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers is certainly a part of this over-all pattern of increased awareness of media issues, and the growing hope that well-directed pressure can accomplish change.

What has been the response of the media policy makers in the face of widespread and increasing public demands for media accountability? DEREGULATION. Congress is presently considering HR 3333, sponsored by Communications Sub-Committee Chairman Lionel Van Deerlin. This bill calls for the eventual deregulation of radio, television, cable and common carrier systems. That this move should come at this time is no coincidence. While it may not be a well-orchestrated-full-fledged conspiracy, it is part of an over-all pattern of government deregulation, justified in rhetorical calls for "freedom of market." This deregulation is coming at a time when the public demand for government responsibility, as witnessed in the consumer and anti-nuclear movements, are forcing the federal regulatory commissions to become legitimate. It is no longer possible for these commissions to maintain their positions as hand-maidens to the industries they were created to regulate. A post-Water gate vigilance has made that kind of collusion difficult, if not impossible.

The challenge is getting the deregulation passed before this vigilant public understands its implications: thus the desperation of Van Deerlin to get his bill through this year. The longer that it stalls, the greater will be the public opposition. If there were field hearings this year, there would be no chance that it could pass. If the public is asked about regulation versus the free market, what will be their response? What kind of faith does a Pinto driver have in the free market? Or someone who bought Firestone radials? Or the community surrounding Three Mile Island? Or anyone waiting in line to pay a dollar a gallon for gas? Annenburg School of Communications in Los Angeles recently conducted a poll: they asked people if they wanted retention of license evaluation and the public interest standard, two aspects of regulation that are eliminated in Van Deerlin's bill. The overwhelming majority {92%} opted for the public interest as the standard for broadcasting and 93% were in favor of regular license evaluation and regulation. [1]

Free competition does not exist in an unbalanced situation. Dependence on paternalistic good-will will never change the situation. Independents know that the FACT (even before any outcome) that there is an ECLU suit against the networks, [2] has had a more profound effect on the air than any amount of network hype about the "new documentary" or Congressional musings about "free flow of ideas." Independents know that the specified proportion for them in the 1979 TV Funding Bill means dollars and cents and ultimately airtime, something no hectoric about "diversity and diverse sources" could ensure. The ranks of independents are growing. The membership of AIVF has doubled in the last year and a half to over 1,000. Similar organizations are forming in Madison, Atlanta, San Francisco, Boston, Philadelphia and Minneapolis. Their demands will grow and their needs will be made known. The 1979 Public Telecommunications Funding Bill is a recognition of that.

Within the 1979 Bill there is also a provision for open public television station board meetings. This one ruling will probably have an even more lasting effect on the PBS system than the stipulations for independent programming. It means that independents can go to their public stations and make

1. Broadcasting. April 30, P. 29. .
2. The Emergency Civil Liberties Union is currently representing some twenty independent producers, in a suit against CBS, NBC and ABC over their restrictive policies of only broadcasting in-house social documentaries.

themselves known and heard. The drawbridge is down. The fortress that PTV has maintained will never quite be the same. The stations, in particular the larger ones, were well aware of the implications of this mandate, as their bitter and well-financed opposition to that section of the bill indicated. Congress, aware of a growing public disenchantment with the BBC-dominated PBS system, could find no rhetoric that would justify excluding public participation in station affairs. Tax-payers and station members have an undeniable right to access to the decisions and the financial records of the stations that depend on their contributions. Letting the public in, however, also meant letting in the independent producers. The stations are more wary of independents than the general public. Independents at an open board meeting are more dangerous than any other consumer/viewer group. They know the business, and they can use that knowledge to form wedges for change.

This kind of intrusion into the machinations of the establishment by well-informed professionals is a phenomenon that Columbia economist, Eli Ginsberg, noted in an article in the March Scientific American. In his view, the growing cadres of college graduates in all professions and in managerial categories could eventually pose a threat to the entire system.

"Clearly their judgement and authority narrows the discretion of top management in the public agencies and business organizations in which they are employed."

He advocated the inclusion of these outsiders:

"No establishment can ensure its survival without the recruitment of talent from outside its ranks. If it does not succeed in the full co-optation of the new-comers, however, it may leave itself vulnerable to them as they proceed to advance their own interests and aims and succeed in usurping decision-making power. It remains to be seen whether the demands of the American mandarins can be met without subversion of the risk-taking, profit-seeking, efficiency criteria on which the country's business system has long rested."

The establishment can respond with either increased accommodation and co-optation, or with exclusionary and restrictive policies. Either way, the opposition is likely to grow. Either way the rhetoric contradicts the reality of the situation. For the ever increasing group of outsiders (the independents, the artists, the women, minorities, the public interest and consumer groups), a policy of OPEN MARKET is inevitably a restrictive and exclusionary structure - one which can only lessen diversity by allowing the already overwhelming and pervasive systems to increase their hegemony. This will make those structures more obvious and ultimately more vulnerable. A diverse and publicly responsive media environment can only exist in a protective context of REGULATION. Accommodation to the pressures of the public and the independents will raise expectations and increase the need for even greater participation. Piecemeal legislative reform will not solve the problems that are posed in the area of communications.

No matter what options are taken by the telecommunications industry and Congress, either toward regulatory/protection or toward unbridled profit-seeking by increasingly larger consortiums of corporate interests (or ultimately by the unilateral dominance by A.T. & T., as HR3333 seems to promulgate), the type of resistance that has developed in the past few years is not likely to lessen. This resistance is rooted in a fundamental economic shift. Mind power is replacing labor power. Information workers will continue to press for control as information systems replace mechanical and industrial production modes. Because it is their minds that are needed for this kind of work, they cannot be totally subjected and still remain useful and vital to the system. A kernel of resistance remains. No matter what use is made of them,

their ability to be useful is contingent upon keeping their minds alive. Therefore they are always a threat to the system.

The demands for increased media control and accountability in this country is not an isolated phenomenon. It is part of a global awakening that is evident in the UNESCO communications deliberations and in the preparations for the WARC meetings in the fall. The third world is demanding reassignment of spectrum allocations and an end to U.S. domination of news agencies and cultural affairs. Independent media producers are important participants in the discussions of telecommunications policies and responsibilities» Imaginative regulatory structures can be responsive to humanity's needs - both for justice and for unconstrained creative expression. These discussions are the cultural aspect of the demands for conservation and the just allocation and development of the world's resources. The crucial resource at issue here is not the spectrum - it is the human mind.

1. The U.S. and 153 other countries will meet in Geneva for the World Administrative Radio Conference for ten weeks starting September, 1979, to decide the future of spectrum allocations-.

BLACK FILMMAKERS, BLACK AUDIENCES, AND PUBLIC
TELEVISION PROGRAMMING'. M EXAMINATION OF ISSUES
AND OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Submitted, by:
Warrington Hudlin
George P. Cunningham
Directors
The Black Filmmaker Foundation

No matter how bad or controversial the Black presence is in commercial television, the visibility of commercial television's response in programming and hiring is surprisingly good when compared to that of public television.

In employment the level of minority participation in the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the Public Broadcasting Service is roughly equal to that of ABC, CBS, and NBC. Only in the technician category does CPB dramatically exceed the record of the commercial networks, and in the officials/managers category PBS is dramatically below the averages of commercial television. [1]

However, on the local level, available figures suggest minority employment in public television lags far behind that of commercial television.[2]

Available data for minority presence in programming on public and commercial television is not always comparable and only suggests what really is the appearance of the overwhelming difference between public television and commercial television. A Formula for Change cites minority representation of 13.4 percent on general adult programming, 10.5 percent in adult dramatic programming, and only 1.6 percent in adult music and dance programs on public television (page 149). Window Dressing on the Set cites 15.1 percent as the latest figure for the number of minority characters appearing on commercial television. Yet this small advantage to commercial television only suggests the difference in visibility. While no comparable figures exist for commercial television, a disproportionate share of Blacks and Hispanics are found in supporting and minor roles on public television, and minority characters spend less time on the air than white characters. [3]

Most important, however, in the issue of visibility, is the presence on commercial television of half a dozen Black oriented shows while public television has only one. Black Perspective on the News, which is not carried by all of its stations. If commercial television is to be blamed for the stereotypical and demeaning low points in minority programming, it must also be credited with the most important successes on the local and national levels. Where commercial television has been bold, public television has been embarrassingly timid. The irony in this comparison is that public television had the opportunity to be the pioneer in minority participation and minority portrayal. Being a new system, it had an opportunity to avoid the well known pitfalls of commercial television and it was not necessarily the heir to a legacy of discriminatory practices and ossified concepts. However, in reviewing the record of public television after its first decade, we must unfortunately conclude with the Report of the Task Force on Minorities in Public Broadcasting that "the informational, cultural, and educational benefits and opportunities which should flow from the tax payer-supported public broadcasting system are so slight as to be insignificant insofar as minorities are concerned." [4]

Public television is now in the position that commercial television found itself in a decade ago, one of re-evaluation, re-examination, and corrections of past inequities. As it faces the future, one of its most important challenges will be to include minorities within the framework of its very special mandate.

The impact of the minority presence on commercial television, the dramatic and popular successes of shows like Roots, Minstrel Man, A Woman Called Moses, and The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman, as well as the controversies surrounding shows like King, Youth Terror, and Sanford and Son,

have served to draw attention away from public television's performance in this area.

However, if public television is to expand its role, it must understand that its success is going to involve it in increasingly intense scrutiny in the area of minority participation.

Black Americans and the Public Television Mandate

Black filmmakers share in common with other American artists a general frustration with the idea of culture held by public television. We feel that not only is public television bias toward W.A.S.P. American culture, but its overall cultural outlook is extremely Europocentric.

As Carnegie II points out, the problem is a two-edged one. The importation of programs from Great Britain gives the distinct "impression that public television prefers actors and commentators with British accents" and at the same time creates hostility towards public television in all segments of the underemployed American creative community. [5]

Public television has not paid enough attention to developing, caring for, and exposing the artist as an American, much less the artist as a Black or as a Hispanic. The problem here is very complicated and centered around the ideas of defining American culture. We do not and would not propose a culturally isolationist point of view and we do not deny the European background of American culture, but we would assert that the African background is equally important to Blacks and to a true understanding of American culture. We also assert that America has created a rich and strong culture of its own in diverse places as the Southern Afro-American church and the store front in Appalachia. It should be a matter of embarrassment to the public television system that its flag ship stations sit in the middle of the major American cultural centers and reflect to the nation so little of the activities going on around them. The same stations also sit in the middle of large ethnic communities with major pools of internationally known minority talent and make little attempt to reach these audiences or draw on this talent.

WHET, for example, is licensed to Newark, New Jersey, a city with a large Black majority, and is headquartered in New York City, which by next year's census will be 50 percent Black and Hispanic. New York is also the home of the Negro Ensemble Company, the International African American Ballet, and the National Black Theater. Neither the ethnic makeup of the community nor the existence of minority talent is reflected in WNET's in-house programming, program acquisitions, and decision-making staff.

Public Television and the Black Audiences

Because public television has no consistent commitment to minority programming, it has not created a following in the Black community. Commercial television pays greater attention to minority interests and with the default of public television, in this area. Blacks have come to look to commercial television rather than public television for programming of interest to them. Public television's small minority audience share hurts the Black independent filmmaker in two ways. First, public television does not consider the Black community a significant part of its audience and therefore rarely programs minority shows. [6] Second, the occasional program that would be of interest to Black audiences is an island in a white sea and must compete against established viewing habits that public television has done little to break. Of course programming and audiences are tied together in a cycle. There is no reason why public television could not have a loyal following in the Black community. The more minority programs that appear on public television, the larger the minority share of the audience will become, not only

drawing minority viewers to programs of special interest to them, but to the whole of the public television offering.

The Image of the Black American

Minority communities are, with justification, very image conscious. The history of Black people's response to their portrayal in the commercial media adequately demonstrates this point. [7] The issue of "positive images" will be faced by all those involved in minority programming. Obviously there is concern when Black images are controlled by Whites, but Black creative artists have not been exempt from criticism. The issue itself has a long history that antedates the concern that has become focused on the media in the last decade. Black artists and writers, since the 1920's, have been subject to criticism of their portrayal of Black characters. The short range way of solving this problem is to make sure that presentations by Blacks are so bland and non-controversial as to elicit no comment whatsoever. The Black filmmaker looks on this way out of the problem with dread because it locks him into a bland formula that cannot tap his potential as an artist. The other solution is more long range and demands a constant and consistent presentation of a variety of portraits of Black life. In short the real issue is not "positive images" but the multiplicity of images. No single program ought to be made to bear the burden of trying to be representative of the total Black community. On purely artistic grounds, the "positive image" controversy has had a bad history. In the Black community it has reflected the sentiments of some members of the middle class who object to any portrayal of non-middle class Blacks.

In the extreme, as one critic points out, this attitude states:

"If the 'truth' or even an aspect of the 'truth' about Black people was held to be in any manner pejorative, then it must be censored, for images of 'the lowly life' would hamper the quest for civil rights." [8]

Ironically, our most distinguished literary artists, Langston Hughes, Richard Wright, and Ralph Ellison have been raked over the "positive image" coals, but their most controversial works have at a later time not only been accepted but also praised as the most important in the canon of Black literature. [9]

Public Television and the Black Independent Filmmaker

The creative work of Black filmmakers will challenge public television programmers to develop critical standards about films with unique cultural and political sensibilities. But the vast majority of public television programmers and acquisition managers are white. Of 12U public TV local program executives, one (0.8 percent) is a minority. This is a drop from 1977 when of 13k there were two minorities (one percent). [10] Such non-minority programmers are inhibited by the same emotional, political, and cultural responses to Blacks as others in the majority culture. Films by Black filmmakers often have and will run counter to white middle class sensibilities, but it is non-traditionalism in subject matter and approach that they will make a major contribution to American culture. It is, unfortunately, also more than likely that the white programmer will miss much of the cultural significance in the work of Black independent filmmakers and only appreciate those films that most closely approximate the aesthetic, linguistic, and political references of majority society. The greatest danger in the increase in minority representation is that programs about Blacks will proliferate, but will use established white programs as their models. While this approach might satisfy the purely social and political need for an increased minority presence, it will miss a great many of the benefits to be had from work that is artistically challenging and will not be offering to minorities programming that is truly an alternative to commercial television. We feel that a preference for the traditional poses a

great danger to the creative work and artistic development of filmmakers who seek to work within and truly reflect their ethnic sensibilities, and furthermore for Black audiences it inhibits their identification with the work and the efforts of public television. It is after all in the area of the experimental, the challenging, and the exploratory that public television must make its reputation in the minority as well as majority communities.

Black Programming: Black Filmmakers versus White Filmmakers

There is a deep and growing frustration within the Black independent film community arising from their attempts to acquire public television funds for the production and acquisition of films about the life and culture of Black Americans. Their frustration becomes resentment when public television funds are committed to films about Blacks made by Whites, like Police Tapes, Harlem Voices and Faces, Bad Boys, Black Britannica, Always for Pleasure, and Black Man's Land. The use of white producers to make so many of the films about Blacks is almost, in the eyes of Black filmmakers, tantamount to saying that Black life and culture is worth documentary and dramatic portrayals on public television, but that Black filmmakers are not critically or technically qualified to make them. The irony is that more likely the reverse is true. Black American life portrayed and documented by outsiders invariably is bereft of the cultural and political sensibility of Black people. The white filmmaker is never privy to the interior cultural reference among Blacks and as a result the white filmmaker/interviewer's questions tell us more about white attitudes about Blacks than the subjects' answers tell us about Blacks. In fact quite often there is an on-camera joke being played on the white filmmaker, a joke that he never becomes aware of. So as the white filmmaker seeks to impose some terms for understanding his Black subjects, the subjects, as the saying goes, "change the joke and slip the yoke."

Many Black independents describe the Black subject-White filmmaker phenomenon as media colonization. This is a tension that should not exist. It is intellectually indefensible to maintain that whites have no right to avoid claims of exclusivity, when Black filmmakers are not given the opportunity to make films on non-Black subjects. Since such a strong tradition exists in the majority community. Black filmmakers ought to be supported and encouraged to explore non-minority subjects. The white filmmaker's perspective on Black subjects would be better understood and appreciated in a schedule of programs that offers the perspective of Black filmmakers on a consistent basis.

Public Television Funds and Minority Programming

Competition for scarce resources is a reality. The consciousness and personality of public television has been shaped by its history of inadequate funding. Every recommendation and mandate to share the programming pie is addressed to a system in which no one feels that he has enough to eat. Yet neither public television nor Black filmmakers can depend on increased funding to ease them out of their problems. First, in an era when the American citizen is much more conscious of the tax bite and of government expenditures, such an increase is far from certain. And second, and more importantly, it is equally unlikely that any level of funding will keep step with the system's ability to generate legitimately fundworthy ideas. So, the perception of hunger will remain. The adequate representation of minorities must be understood as one of determining priorities, a problem that will remain at every funding level. Public television cannot avoid making and regularizing a commitment to minority programming. The inclusion of minority filmmakers and addressing the programming needs of minority communities must be addressed squarely as a question of priorities, not funding.

The Report of the Carnegie Commission on the Future of Public Broadcasting

A Public Trust, the Report of the Carnegie Commission on the Future of Public Broadcasting, emphasizes what we feel to be the important frame of reference for the inclusion of minority programming in the public television schedule. Carnegie maintains that minority programming "should not in any way be seen as merely a political obligation to special interests, but as a difficult and challenging goal aimed ultimately at using America's cultural diversity in order to promote intergroup understanding." [12] Carnegie further acknowledges the problem and is incisive in defining the challenges for the system, its recommendations weak and tentative. Its only recommendation related to minority programming is for planning research on Black cultural programming and related types of special programs. [13] The Commission did not spend enough time on the problems of minorities and the real meaningfulness of its recommendations in this area are questionable.

The Commission's recommendation of planning research for minority programming would treat the minority audience out of the context of the total American viewing public. What is clearly needed is an internal redefinition of public television's relation to the American audience and a study which would focus on its present audience, on those who do not now watch public television, and minorities. Otherwise this information gathering would become a poor substitute of the funding and promotion of a wide range of program offerings by and about Blacks and minorities.

We are concerned about the decision-making process within the Commission's proposed Program Services Endowment. We hope that Black and minority representation on its staff and review panels will not just be token representation but in ratios that would allow decision-making leverage, and not simply advocacy in the review of minority films and proposals.

Overall, the Commission's recommendation of minority programming is limited to a general endorsement. Although minority filmmakers would have preferred a detailed response to this serious problem, we are even more disturbed by the Commission's explicit assumption that with an increase in public television funding, minority programming needs will be addressed. [14]. This notion is interwoven with their position that the implementation of this programming should be self-imposed and self-enforced. The Commission's position reflects a faith in public television decision makers that to us seems unwarranted considering their performance to date. Unfortunately, the overall approach of the Commission follows this line of reasoning and in effect holds minority programming hostage to increased funding.

The Report of the Task Force on Minorities in Public Broadcasting

The recommendations of Carnegie II fail to address the problems of minorities in public broadcasting in ways that would lead directly to concrete and meaningful change. Fortunately the Report of the Task Force on Minorities in Public Broadcasting focuses on the problem in a highly productive way. As opposed to Carnegie II, the Task Force Report, "A Formula For Change," should be considered the major document on the issues of Blacks and public television. The Task Force report thoroughly documents the need for changes and provides concrete recommendations and a timetable for implementations. We list below some of the highlights of its recommendations that we feel are particularly important to the Black independent filmmaker.

The Task Force recommends that the Corporation for Public Broadcasting provide specific funds on a matching and non-matching basis for the production and acquisition of minority programming based on a minimum percentage that reflects the national minority population.[15] We see a regulation of financial commitment as the only basis from which to integrate

minorities into public television in a meaningful and consistent way.

The Task Force recommends that the Corporation for Public Broadcasting lease a satellite transponder which would be minority controlled and used solely for the distribution of minority programs to stations. [16] We feel that this is an exciting and useful idea. It would provide minority filmmakers an opportunity to have direct contact with local stations and allow local stations more independence in meeting their responsibilities toward minorities.

The Task Force recommends that a Standard Proposal Review Process be established. [17] All independent filmmakers will benefit from this recommendation. The clearly stated guidelines and timetables for processing and review will do much to ease the tensions between public television and independent filmmakers.

The Task Force establishes the definition of minority programming as programming "by and about minorities." It points out that this programming should not necessarily be perceived as programming for minorities only.[18] The Task Force also makes note of the new PBS policy of "mainstreaming." We feel that mainstreaming is valuable, but it should be a supplement to specific budget allocations for minority specials and series rather than a substitute.

Conclusion

Until 1973, public television had no clearly definable policies relating to minorities. Since that time there have been at least 22 policy resolutions passed by the Board of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and two advisory panels created. Although CPB has been long on verbiage relative to improving the status of minorities, the Minority Task Force notes that recommendations of these panels and resolutions of the CPB Board have not been implemented to any appreciable degree by the public television management.

It is in public television's own interest to work immediately and effectively to correct this failure to represent and speak to all Americans. We cannot over-emphasize the fact that this failure is not only a social and political failure, but also an artistic and creative failure. The problems are not overly complex nor are they delicate nor difficult to handle. It is a matter of deciding whether or not public television will make a commitment to reaching minority audiences and incorporate minority filmmakers, and whether or not they are willing to allocate part of its budget to do this.

About the Authors

WARRINGTON HUDLIN is a Black independent filmmaker and a director of The Black Filmmaker Foundation. Mr. Hudlin is the producer/director of two critically acclaimed documentary films, BLACK AT YALE and STREET CORNER STORIES, which were both broadcast in WNET's Independent Focus Series.

GEORGE P. CUNNINGHAM is Deputy Chairman of Africana Studies at Brooklyn College (CUNY) and a director of The Black Filmmaker Foundation.

THE BLACK FILMMAKERS FOUNDATION is a non-profit tax exempt organization established to support the independently produced work of Black filmmakers and video artists. The Foundation sponsors programs and services designed to facilitate and encourage this work and activities which will promote

its public recognition and support. The Foundation's current projects include the publication of a catalogue of independently produced films by Black filmmakers, the organizing of a Black Filmmaker Cooperative Distribution Service and the co-production of the "Filmobile" and "Dialogue" series of outdoor traveling film exhibitions in New York City.

Footnote(1.) Percentage of Minorities in Commercial and Public Television
(National)

	<u>Officials/Managers</u>	<u>Professionals</u>	<u>Technicians</u>
ABC	20.8 %	17.7 %	25.7 %
CBS	20.2 %	21.7 %	26.2 %
NBC	14.7 %	24.2 %	24.6 %
CPB	21.0 %	21.0 %	53.0 %
PBS	8.0 %	19.0 %	27.0 %

(2.) Percentage of Minorities in Commercial and Public Television
(Local)

	<u>Officials/Managers</u>	<u>Professionals</u>	<u>Technicians</u>
Public Stations	6.7 %	11.4 %	12.2 %
Commercial Stations	14.4 %	28.0 %	32.0 %

(3 A.) Percentage of Minority Characters on Public Television
According to Role (General Adult, Adult-Dramatic)

	<u>White</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>Hispanic</u>
Major	23.8 %	9.1 %	0.0 %
Supporting	3.3 %	45.5 %	0.0 %
Minor	73.0 %	45.5 %	100.0 %

(3 B.) Amount of Time Spent in Active Participation by White and
Minority Characters

	<u>White</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>Hispanic</u>
1-30 seconds	27.9 %	36.4 %	50.0 %
31-60 seconds	21.3 %	18.2 %	0.0 %
1-5 minutes	41.8 %	36.4 %	50.0 %
5-10 minutes	6.6 %	0.0 %	0.0 %
10-20 minutes	3.3 %	0.0 %	0.0 %
20 + minutes	8.2 %	9.1 %	0.0 %

- (4.) A Formula for Change: The Report of the Task Force on Minorities in Public Broadcasting (n.p., 1978), p. xx.
- (5.) A Public Trust: The Report of the Carnegie Commission on the Future of Public Broadcasting, (New York, 1979)» P. 159. Labor Unions also are beginning to express dissatisfaction with the number of imports from Great Britain. "Ask Limits on TV Imports, Etc.," Variety. December 13, 1977.
- (6.) "1. About 48.6% (18) of the 40 public television station managers responding to the Task Force management questionnaire each spend less than \$5,000 annually for national minority programming. 2. Slightly under one-third of the public television station managers responding (11, or 30.6%) each spend less than \$5,000 annually on local minority programming. 3. Of the 40 public television station managers responding to the Task Force management questionnaire 79.. 5^ (32) indicated^ that there are no monies specifically earmarked for promoting (publicizing) local minority programs. 4. About 17.5^ (7) of the television station managers responding to the Task Force questionnaire stated that they do not promote general audience programming among minorities. A Formula For Change, pp. 154-155.
- (7.) Nathan I. Huggins, "Opportunities for Minorities in Television and Movies, Facade of Humor can Obscure Substance of Subject," Washington post. April 13, 1978, and Eugenia Collier, "Black Shows for White Viewers," in Freedomways Reader: Afro-American in the Seventies, ed. Ernest Kaiser (New York, 1977), PP. 235-245, both present different aspects of the controversy.
- (8.) Henry Louis Gates, Jr., "Portraits in Black," Harpers June. 1976, p. 18.
- (9.) Langston-Hughes says about one volume of his poetry, "The Pittsburgh Courier ran a big headline across the top of the page, LANGSTON HUGHES' BOOK OF POEMS TRASH. The headline in the New York Amsterdam News was LANGSTON HUGHES - THE SEWER DWELLER. The Chicago Whip characterized me as 'The poet lowrate of Harlem.' Others called the book a disgrace to the race, a return to the dialect tradition, and a parading of all our racial defects before the public....There was a reason for it, of course. They had seen their race laughed at and caricatured so often in stories like those by Octavus Roy Cohen, maligned and abused so often in books like Thomas Dixon's, made a servant or a clown always in the movies, and forever defeated on the Broadway stage, that when Negroes^ wrote books they wanted them to be books in which only good Negroes, clean and cultured and not-funny Negroes, beautiful and nice and upper class, were presented....But I did not see how they could expect every Negro author to write such books. Certainly, I personally knew very few people anywhere who were wholly beautiful and wholly good. Besides I felt that the masses of our people had as much in their lives to put into books as did those more fortunate ones who had been born with some means and the ability to work up to a master's degree at a Northern college. Anyway, I didn't know the upper class Negroes well enough to

write much about them. I knew only the people I had grown up with, and they weren't people whose shoes were always shined, who had been to Harvard, or who had heard of Bach. But they seemed to me good people, too.... Curiously enough, a short ten years later, many of those very poems in Fine Clothes to the Jew were being used in Negro schools and colleges." The Big Sea (New York, 1940), pp. 265-68.

(10.) A Formula For Change, p 155.

(11.) A Public Trust, pp. 157-158.

(12.) *ibid.*, p. 168

(13.) *ibid.*

(14.) *ibid.*, pp. 284-285

(15.) A Formula For Change, p. 251

(16.) *ibid.*, p. 257

(17.) *ibid.*, p. 253

(18.) *ibid.*, pp. 158-159

INDEPENDENT MANDATE

Alan Jacobs

The history of independent producers at the gates of public television is not encouraging. Independents are outsiders by definition and commonly "mistrusted, though more likely ignored and unknown. Stations have not been responsive to our work. Programming formats have rarely been designed to accommodate the diversity of independent production, and even its occasional programming represents only a very narrow and cautious selection of available independent work.

This situation has been aggravated by stations inadvertently placing themselves in competition with independent producers. Having built up their own houses -- production facilities, staff, etc. -- the stations' first priority is naturally to sustain themselves. Hence money for independent production has too often meant in-house production or independent production forced to "affiliate" with the station in a way that ensures station control and, through unreasonable taxing of the budget, support for station overhead costs.

In reviewing this history, the Carnegie Commission II reaches similar conclusions about the limits of public television working with independents. The Commission acknowledges the important contributions of stations in providing mainstream programs and services. But it is precisely this daily programming which draws the Commission's most serious criticism of public television.

"We have seen only sporadic efforts to permit artists-- access to the system; only rarely has the system been in a position to seek out the finest American talent, so that the public might benefit from their endeavor. ... We see instead a system where only a handful of people, usually with proven track records and tested formats, are trusted to exercise discretion in program making. 1/

The Commission's explanation for PTV's failure to support creative artists points to the structural organization of the system. Not that stations are unwilling to provide creative and innovative programming, but that they are unable to provide it. As "an instrument of mass communication that simultaneously respects the artistry of the individuals who create programs, the needs of the public that form the audience, and the forces of political power that supply the resources", [2] the stations are being asked to maintain an untenable balance. These political pressures are further compounded by chronic underfunding and a substantial dependency on corporate and private monies -- all implacable factors constraining the ability of the system to take risks. And without this vital freedom, according to the Commission, there is no basis for creative programming. [3]

Citing creative programming as "the most critical continuing need of the system" and certain of the stations' inability to provide it, the Commission has projected a Program Services Endowment -- an autonomous and insulated programming mechanism administered by a chief executive. The Endowment's function is

[1] A PUBLIC TRUST, Carnegie Commission II, p.64

[2] Ibid, p.11

[3] Ibid, p.160

to create the missing innovative programming, specifically by working with and drawing upon the greatest diversity of American artists and journalists: "the reverend and the rude, the disciplined and the rambunctious --a celebration of American freedom in all its unpredictable varieties a revelation of : diversity." [4] The Endowment's task then is "to find and sustain the inventive and inspired people who are capable of making the American scene into a hall mark of excellence'," [5] people, the Commission emphasizes, "notably absent from the present system." [6]

Well, who are these people? The Commission never says. It never identifies them except by their exclusion from programming. Where is this teeming diversity of creative American talent?

I see them in the independent producers from all parts of this country who have-consistently been working in the widest range of formats and subjects; independent artists and journalists initiating their-own work, motivated by personal feelings, and free to determine the perspective and shape of what they produce. Seen this way, the Carnegie Commission II Report is a commitment to independent producers and the importance of making their work accessible to the American television audience.

This commitment was recently echoed in the chambers of Congress with the passing of the 1978 Public Telecommunications

[4] Ibid., p.300

[5] bid., p.28

[6] Ibid., p.3

Financing Act. I have excerpted a section of the Conference report that accompanies Congress' new funding bill.

"The conferees also agreed that a 'substantial' amount of funds allocated to programming by CPB should be reserved for independent producers. In agreeing to the term 'substantial' amount for independent producers, it is the conferees' intention to recognize the important contribution independents can make in innovative and creative new programming. By 'independent producer' the conferees have in mind producers not affiliated with any public telecommunications entity and especially the smaller organizations and individuals who,, while talented, may not yet have received national recognition. The talents of these producers have not been adequately utilized in the past the conferees fully expect the Corporation to take the necessary steps to increase the level of participation previously available to these smaller independent producers". [7]

In my estimation we have an independent mandate: substantial new monies from the Government allocated for more independent production to be programmed on public television and the recent all of the Carnegie Commission II for a Program Services Endowment to find and sustain the creative American talent historically excluded from public television.

The vital question this raises for independents is how the mandate will be implemented. Who will identify the diversity of independent producers? How will projects be selected for acquisition or production? How will work acquired or produced be programmed? What will be the link to broadcast? How will work be promoted? These issues have never been satisfactorily resolved for independents. The increased Government funding intensifies our concern that new solutions be more responsive to our needs

[7] Conference Report to accompany HR 12605, p.30

and benefit directly from our experience with the public television system.

On careful consideration all these questions resolve into one crucial concern: the nature of the funding mechanism. : Government funding for independents can be disbursed by three obvious structures: stations, existing independent organizations, and/or newly created national structures like Carnegie's Programm Services Endowment. Certainly there are many variations for each of these models as well as the possibility of more than one operating at the same time. However, for the purpose of this paper I am going to evaluate them as clearly distinguishable, structural alternatives.

First, let us consider the stations. Directing money to independent producers through the stations would be tantamount to a complete de-nial of the findings of Carnegie Commission II. It would be willfully blind to the Commission's conclusion that the stations are not capable of creative and innovative programming; that station programming has historically excluded creative independent talent in favor of safe and conventional mainstream programs. The Commission's explicit concern, and ours, is "not the programs that are made, but the programs that are not made". [8]

The availability of increased government funding for independent production is not going to change the stations' programming bias. Putting the money in their hands would be the equiva-

[8] Op. cit. Carnegie Commission II, p.60

lent of putting independents on staff. We would be enlisted to produce more of their programming and would find considerably less support for self-initiated work.

independents

The other problem/have encountered at the stations is the unreasonable amount of money these institutions siphon off the top to cover their large overhead costs. This money should flow as directly as possible to independents at the least possible cost.

The second model is provided by existing independent organizations outside the public television system. These are considerably more promising as distributing mechanisms. The main difference between these organizations and the stations is that authority and control reside with the independents themselves - a design which holds out the promise of visibility to a much greater variety and bolder selection of independent work. As a functioning part of the independent community, these entities do not need to rely on the stations' proverbial "council of advisers" as their bridge to independent production. They are often in direct contact with local production.

Although these organizations of independents could develop solid regional programming, they cannot, by themselves, address the magnitude of the independent mandate. Both the substantial amount of funding mandated by Congress and the great diversity of production sought by the Carnegie Commission II will require the development of a national mechanism which would have the range and vision necessary to meet the full task. The Commission's idea for the Program Services Endowment represents an effort to respond to the perceived need for national organization. Unfortunately, the structure they envisage places the responsibility for all programming in the hands of one chief executive. The risk is immense. One person would unavoidably be subject to.' enormous political pressures. Furthermore^to rely on the individual taste of one executive to provide national programming for all independent production is self-defeating: it would inevitably limit the desired scope and diversity of independent work.

We, the Association of Independent Video and Film, are proposing the creation of a Center for Independent Media, a national structure with strong regional roots, designed to develop and support the widest variety of independent film and video in all parts of the country. 'This programming entity would not be a production center. Its function would be to acquire and assign independent production, to package and program... that production, and to broker it to public television.

As is apparent from the preceding discussion, the main problems confronted by a funding mechanism are: 1) the selection of projects -- that is, who has the authority to select production and what is the process of selection? 2) programming and promotion - who will be packaging the work and how will it be programmed? How will the work be promoted? 3) broadcast -- probably the most serious problem for any independent programming entity, how will these programmes get air-time?

The task of the Center for Independent Media is twofold: (1) to support independent production by identifying it, funding it, and promoting it; (2) to get it broadcast on public television. The selection process would be organized around a system of rotating panels, not unlike the NEA. This is a peer-review process with all the advantages of an open competition judged by people thoroughly familiar with the field. The fundamental difference between the Center and the NEA is that the Center's awards would be contracts and not grants.

Television distribution is a commitment the Center would make to projects it assigns or acquires (another important difference distinguishing it from the NEA). Panelists at the Center are consequently not merely the peers of application producers. They would include as well representatives from media art centers, community organizations, experienced station programmers, PBS and CPB. Selection will not only be made on the individual merits of each project. Projects will also be evaluated as part of programming formats projected by the Center's staff and panels.

The link to broadcast depends to some extent on the inclusion of representatives from the public television system in the selection process. However, the peer-review panels would naturally be more heavily weighted with independent producers as their function is not to provide more conventional station programming but to take the risks stations cannot take, to program for small and less affluent audiences, to select controversial production that may offend. The Center's job is to broker these programs to public television as soon as they're selected. A panel which includes station representatives as well as independents should increase the likelihood of transmission.

The Center's staff would function as an executive producer in assisting projects to completion within a given time period. If the Center is going to be seen as a national programmer and supplier, it has to be in a position to guarantee its programming. It is the only way to earn the trust of the stations.

Congress has provided us with substantial funding for a three-year period. It is now our responsibility to validate this commitment by devising a national structure capable of identifying and sustaining the wealth of independent production historically absent from the present public television system.

HOW TO KEEP EXPERIMENTAL VIDEO
ON PBS NATIONAL PROGRAMMING

By
Nam June Paik
June 6, 1979

The new Carnegie Commission report, A Public Trust, rightfully argues that public television needs more innovation, research and development. I have worked since 1968 in this sphere of television, at WGBH in Boston and at VfflET in New York in the days of the Ford Foundation's Public Broadcasting Laboratory, and I would like to suggest a few CONCRETE plans from my own experience.

Everyone knows that we need more innovation. But we also know that innovative programs are not always popular during the lifetime of the artist. How-, then, do we justify in a broadcast schedule the rather exotic programs of artists on tax-supported TV channels?

If PBS gives to the public only what the public wants, PBS will become the same as commercial TV and will kill itself. However, if PBS gives to the public only what the public SHOULD have, then PBS kills itself also, because no public will follow it.

How to solve this dilemma?

An ancient Chinese said, "It is not hard to become a sage; it is harder to find one." Even then there seemed to be problems in the selection and editing process. Therefore, let's look at some other more successful information-processing sectors, that is, the worlds of publishing and photo-journalism.

Doubleday's editors, for example, are surrounded by thousands of manuscripts ALREADY COMPLETED by writers from U.S. Presidents to college sophomores. Expensive manuscripts are not necessarily better than, say a. free poem by a. avant-garde poet, who just wants his works to be published. Both can be offered to the public by the publisher and there will not be a de facto censorship. Editors at Popular Photography, also, have the sa^e luxury of selecting a few good pictures from 10,000 completed photos - already finished products. In this way, competition and diversity of product are guaranteed. (And, of course, there is also more than one outlet.)

In television, however, this selection process is completely reversed. The program director selects programs, not from finished products. but from mere ideas or scripts. Creators for television therefore need PRIOR FUNDING to make a pilot or product out of an approved script. This. to ny mind, evil necessity of PRIOR FUNDING automatically eliminates about 95 percent of work by new talents because no one is allowed in the television system to risk a production budget on an unknown name.

Again, in the literary world, great individual talents such as James Joyce. Henry Miller, or Jean-Paul Sartre got no advances for their first writings. And many great poems were first published on mimeograph machines. How, in today's television selection process, can a true but undiscovered genius ever successfully go through the funding process?

Therefore: AMERICAN TELEVISION WILL NOT IMPROVE TOO MUCH UNTIL THIS PRIOR FUNDING SYSTEM CEASES TO EXIST AND THE PROGRAM DIRECTORS ARE ABLE TO CHOOSE THE BEST PRODUCT FROM FINISHED WORKS BY MANY FREE CREATORS AS IN

THE FIELDS OF LITERATURE AND PHOTOGRAPHY, (!!!)

The British Broadcasting Corporation should and cannot be the model for PBS because BBC is running with an antiquated philosophy that there is only ONE typewriter in the whole of England, and their job is how to perfect IT. They may have an otherwise liberal philosophy but their existential format is dictator^ in the true etymological sense. America, television must have a philosophy that says: EVERYBODY MUST HAVE HIS OR HER OWN TYPE-WRITER for their expression and participation. In the long run, this is the ONLY THINKABLE way to achieve a truly PUBLIC television. Public TV must become a switchboard for multiple voices using broadcasting and other new Outlets.

This Utopian prophecy is already quite a concrete prospect. Three million VTRs are in use in the world now; in 1983 we will have 32 million VTRs. (There will be 15 million in the U.S., 10 million in Europe, and 7 million in Japan.)

Through the introduction of CCD and "chip" technology, we can soon punch out like doughnuts color cameras without the vidicon tube.

By 1997, the American people will be able to express themselves as easily and as cheaply on videotapes as they now do with poems, photos, dances and songs. At that time, public TV will stand on a new ground, and we may then require Carnegie III!

Needless to say, artists have led this Copernican Revolution from one-way television to two-way television. I cannot emphasize enough the political meaning of Bill Wegman's first tapes with his dog, Man Ray. Using the most primitive SONY CV equipment and without any prior funding, he managed to create a piece which has won the approval of a wide range of people from seum curators to producers of the TONIGHT and TODAY shows, and their audiences. Only PBS engineers had the affrontery and nerve to refuse to broadcast it, even after it had been aired twice by the NBC network. And locally, at WNET and WGBH many times. (After many hassles, PBS reluctantly broadcast Wegman's tapes with flag warnings that it violated the FCC's standard, of Vertical Biasing, for which, stations were told, they could be fined up to \$25,000. Consequently very few PBS stations carried the broadcast.

Our bookshelves contain a much wider variety of subjects and far deeper stimulation of our intellects than television fare because most books are initiated by writers without PRIOR FUNDING. Most TV is initiated by producers with PRIOR FUNDING. In fifteen to twenty years, through the wider use of home VTR as a Time Shifting Machine, a slow conversion of funding and selection methods will occur, as well as, an expansion of prime time viewing from today's three hours to 24 hours a day! At that time, PBS would be able to broadcast program with high intellectual quality but with low public appeal at, for example, 3:00 A.M. and an interested viewer could record it for later viewing.

Now, what else should we do in the next fifteen to twenty years?

I suggest, for one thing, that we broadcast two-way artist-initiated programs, not as avant-garde experimental programs, but as DO IT YOURSELF showcases. Audience participation shows have precedents in print journalism in the "Dear Abby" columns, as letters to the editor or "amateur corners" in photo magazines and. "call-in" shows on radio. In these ways, people can easily relate to programs, even if sometimes the technical quality may not be high. In this way we flip the coin: artist's experimental video will no longer be categorized as low-budget entertainment, but the most successful common people's video creations. Middle America, for which PBS programs always express concern, will respond to such programs even more enthusiastically because advanced two-way video gadgets, including home computers, are sold more in Middle America than on the Eastern-Seaboard, which has a variety of other pastimes.- The-deepening energy crisis will. force the .leisure pattern of rural America, more from Car and Steak to information games. Non-gravity resisting products such as computers and video are energy efficient, therefore inflation-proof: their costs relative to high energy production items such as - cars, steel and steaks, will decline. We can solicit viewers to send in their own video tape products through the airwaves, works lasting a few minutes perhaps, and offer prizes in home video contests. Corporations can back the expenses of such programs. This will be very different from Public Access cable channels. In this case, a highly talented editor would have complete freedom of selection and excerpting. An artist's far-out tapes can be mixed with other documentary shows in magazine formats. Luckily, the new tendency in the video art world is in making short tapes. Each segment can be preceded by a slide of the artist or a short introduction by the artist or amateur himself, so that viewers can relate more easily with it. For technical standards, we should not worry too much.

The new time-base correctors can straighten out most time-base errors. Even if it fails, however, we can rescan the tape with a high resolution camera. Both Wegman's dog tape and John Reilly's IRISH TAPES were rescanned with a normal studio camera and both tapes were aired with great success. Viewers really follow information anyway, not technical quality, especially if the information is sufficiently interesting. The moon landing was the best TV with the worst picture quality!

Eventually, PBS has to accept two technical standards: one for professional entertainment and another for populist, grass-roots video. It is a natural development: The New York Times, uses good paper for its Sunday Magazine section (fashion ads) and less good paper for the news sections. Since in print journalism there are no government restrictions on paper quality. TV should also establish technical'-standards-such as Sync pulse and time-base correction. In print journalism, an attempt to ban publication simply because an essay is printed on cheap paper would be unthinkable.

But we video artists have been living under this arbitrary regulation for fifteen years. We independent producers must test the constitutionality of FCC-NAB's technical standards - to the Supreme Court if necessary, because it amounts to a de facto infringement of the First Amendment. We ask that the ACLU or some enlightened foundations pay for the legal expenses. I say that loudly from my personal agony of having lived under the arbitrary terror of the Vertical Blanking regulation, which has absolutely no consequences to 99 percent of home TV sets. What has angered me even more was that this rule was REGULARLY ignored by virtually ALL the commercial-TV stations during their news broadcasts when they used ENG (electronic news gathering mini-cameras) and reruns of I Love Lucy. WNET local station, seeing that NBC, CBS, and ABC news shows ignored the regulation, was quite tolerant to us. But the PBS national program engineers continually gave us problems. There is no other line of law which has so impeded the healthy development of TV as this Vertical Blank-

ing regulation. Although this problem has now been solved by the introduction of new frame buffers in time-base correctors, we must keep vigilant so that no new artificial barriers will be set up to keep the monopoly of the air waves. The only piece of technical regulation we need is one in which the Sync pulse would be solid enough to make a solid picture frame in the majority of TV sets ten years old or older. I don't imagine that any other technical standard set up by a trade organization such as NAB would stand up in court if challenged on First Amendment grounds.

I assume that not all artists would like the idea of being broadcast in the same series with amateur videomakers from the hinterland. Artworks often need a dignifying-frame, especially if one works with minimalist (esthetic) vocabularies. -However, "emergency Exits" were necessitated by our continuing frustration in having Video Art aired on national airwaves. Although we have made significant inroads into the schedules of WNET and WGBH, especially in the after-11 PM time periods (WNET's TV-Lab has broadcast easily 100 separate shows if one counts my own 30 five-minute pieces at the end of the broadcast schedule, which received respectable ratings and encouraging reviews), we have failed to get regularly on national airtime, or when we did, it was often not carried by local stations.

As far as funding is concerned, the matter is even worse. In the first three years of The Rockefeller Foundation's funding, WGBH matched the \$100,000 a year on a one-to-one basis from 1967 to 1969. Since then, federal funding to CPB increased from a mere \$5 million in 1969 to \$120 million in 1979- an increase of 24 times! But, disastrously, the contribution from stations (local and national) dwindled to practically zero.

The Carnegie Commission report envisions \$190 million annually for the Program Services Endowment, whose only function would be to create TV programs, especially "creative programs." To quote:

While stations will use their considerable resources to provide mainstream programs and services nationwide, the Endowment will concentrate on the unconventional, creative, untested ideas in programming and telecommunication services on which the stations, acting alone or in combination, would be unlikely to risk their funds. (Emphasis added.)

Specifically, Carnegie II recommends that \$10 million be spent for Research and Development alone (pages 132 and 246). From our past track record we are amply justified in getting a small pie from this new funding source. Carnegie II even specifies that "the Endowment might finance a Center for Independent Television, whose job would be to develop broadcast formats that can take advantage of the range of talent among independent TV producers." (page 168)

As a small part of this envisioned "Center for Independent Television," I would like to suggest the following five mechanisms;

A. Fellowship Program

The selection process must satisfy the following conditions:

- 1) It must be cheap and speedy, so that precious money will not be evaporated in the pipeline.
- 2) It must- insulate against any one director's taste. - . -
- 3) Funds must go directly to individuals and not to stations or staff producers.

So far, three funding sources. The Rockefeller Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the New York State Council on the Arts,

have had a fine tradition of promoting independent videomakers and video artists. They all have also fine panel systems, which have so far worked quite well. If the three organizations recommend 15 projects altogether, and fund them at \$10,000 each, it will give the incentive for the Endowment of Carnegie II to match with \$20,000 or \$30,000 each. It will make each project budget for \$30,000 or \$40,000. Creators are not required to make a full 30-minute program, since funds at \$40,000 may be insufficient, especially if one employs professional performers.

B. Roving Editors

One current problem in video art is that people have too many hours of unedited tapes. "Media Bus" alone has more than 500 hours of unedited tape shot since 1969; Some of these tapes increase in value with the passing of time, since videotape has the unique quality of "freezing time" which makes historical feedback even more interesting than immediate playback. Our bottleneck is in editing. It is not only that artists lack machines to edit on, but also, artists have not acquired the skills and mental training to view and make critically hard choices from their own materials. If a new Center for Independent Television were to hire a few highly talented editors who can edit a broadcastable show from such chaotic materials, it could greatly benefit the PBS system. Of course, many artists would resist having their materials changed by a third person, but we will find enough artists who will live with excerpting, especially if the artists get rich compensation, such as \$1,000 per minute, or so.

These editors must be appointed by the program directors of the TV station, or acceptable to them. so that the program director has the FULLEST confidence in their judgment. Program directors of large TV stations are so busy, they have to rely on verbal communication from trusted lieutenants or well-trusted producers. Since videotape watching is time consuming, and since we cannot ask the program directors to extend their day from 24 \o 28 hours, we must therefore set up a mechanism convenient both to independents and programmers. My idea is to let the program director pick his man, but WE artists pay that man's salary, so that we can have veto power I And since this man (or woman) will know where his salary is coming from, he must therefore fight for more air time for the artist and independent.

C. Community Editing Centers

The most heartening development these days is the increasing number of regional editing centers set up or assisted by The Rockefeller Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the New York State Council on the Arts. Editing is the central nervous system and the camera is peripheral as the eyes. Too much attention is spent on camera quality and not enough on editing gear. Producers and even funding agencies tend to favor expenditure on programs with immediate high visibility and not on editing machines with slower returns.. Editing machines should and can become as cheap as a darkroom. If one avoids joy-stick systems (fancy but fragile), an \$8,000 system can produce 10,000 hours or 20 hours a day for two years, if the equipment is properly maintained. That will make the per-hour cost one dollar. The major cost for an editing center : is personnel and space costs - administration, engineers and room rent. This can be reduced if one or two persons supervise four or five machines! Earphone operation can make the sharing of the same room by many people possible. All major cities should and must have such communal editing centers with at least five editing machines. The R and D budget of the Endowment must amplify the trend already begun.

D. A Cost Efficiency Test

Financial self-reliance is a pre-condition for freedom - and two-way video. The artist has again led in this struggle. In a "typical" educational TV show of the past, hardware studio costs took so much money that

producers had no way of hiring good talent for appearances or research. (There were exceptions.) The result was talking head after talking head. The producer-artist must have ample elbow room in choosing the ratio of hardware to software in the budget. For example, one can choose the 3/4 inch format for mastering, and the resulting saving of thousands of dollars can buy a round trip to Moscow. In my tape, "New York-Moscow Media Shuttle," (done in collaboration with Dmitri Devyatkin) I mixed some parts mastered on 3/4 inch tape with parts mastered on 2-inch tape. It was aired nationally once and three times over WNET. Nobody, not even God (much less PBS engineers), could distinguish the parts mastered on 3/4 inch tape from those mastered on 2-inch tape.

New hardware development makes this Hide and Seek game obsolete. A new 1-inch recorder (the NAB approved it for broadcasting) is supposedly better than the 2-inch recorder. I strongly urge that the WNET TV-Lab upgrade - its current 3/4 inch playback master to 3/4 inch playback system in favor of a 1-inch master system which will make artists' tapes achieve full broadcast standard. The price reduction from \$2,500 a day for 2-inch to about \$500 a day for the 1-inch system will pay the new equipment off (about \$70,000) in 35 days, or roughly in ten TV shows.

E. Indexing

The power of The New York Times is found not only in its circulation and quotability, but also in the fact that it is the ONLY newspaper thoroughly indexed. The fleeting vision of one show is bound to be wiped out by the next like a morning dew under the rising sunshine. If it wants to be The New York Times of broadcasting, PBS must develop for critical re-evaluation a healthy hardcopy indexing reference system through the video disc. PBS can thus produce shows to be aired in the future on subjects who may not be celebrated enough when the shows are made. Then we can avoid the embarrassment of having missed two such great geniuses in American art and music as Marcel Duchamp and Harry Partch, who recently died at advanced ages. PBS will live with this shame for the next thousand years.

I want to emphasize for the record two very important quotes from Carnegie II:

The Endowment must have the flexibility to support experiments and high risk projects utilizing non-broadcasting as well as broadcasting systems. (Page 162). . .Endowment will have a programming mission extending beyond the-development of broadcast radio and television shows. It might sponsor a variety of experiments on developing technologies potentially applicable to public telecommunications. (Page 170)

Video artists have been the pioneers. We are the first social group who made an INTERNATIONAL video network through museums, colleges, community centers and libraries for alternative distribution and critical re-evaluation. Three funding sources (The Rockefeller Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the New York State Council on the Arts) should continue and be joined by others in their support of non-broadcasting arts. And the Carnegie II-proposed Endowment must include these non-broadcasting artists under their R and D budgets and programming ventures.

Ezra Pound's fame is not based on his broadcasting from Italy.

454 BROOME STREET, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10013 -212966-7526

"The Independents, Media Arts Centers
and Public Television"

by John Reilly

Introduction

The stage has been set in the past few years for the greater involvement of independent producers in public television. This gradual shift has been a result of a continuing educational and lobbying effort on the part of independents and their organizations. This effort has had many forums: the halls of Congress, the Carnegie Commission, the Museum of Modern Art, hosts of public stations, Arden House seminars, newsletters, and regional and national meetings of all types.

Two significant things have resulted from all of these efforts; the Public Telecommunications Financing Act of 1978 specifying that independent producers and their organizations should receive significant funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and the Carnegie Commission's succinctly presented case for the need of independents to receive better treatment by the public television system and its suggestions for some solutions.

"We feel the question now is how can the Corporation respond to the Congressional mandate, and to the exhaustive documentation and suggestions of Carnegie II. We k-now, of course, the Corporation has been funding non-station productions with as much as 50 percent of their Production Fund allocations but, clearly, from the enormity of the case presented to both the Congress and the Commission, something is missing from this funding effort. We postulate that the missing elements have to do with long range planning on how to achieve maximum results with limited funds, and a clearly identified means of reaching the smaller producers in the independent community on a national, consistent, and fair basis.

The following statement was made by Robben W. Fleming, President of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, on April 3, 1979, before the Subcommittee on Communications of the House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce as part of an oversight hearing on the implementation of the 1978 Public Telecommunications Financing Act:

"Apart from the above, the 1978 Act adds three provisions specifically expanding the CPB's program funding activities. It:

- 1) Expands to 'public telecommunications entities' those who may receive assistance for program . . . development and distribution?
- 2) Expands potential recipients of CPB grants and contracts with specific emphasis on production and acquisition of programs from qualified independent producers, and
- 3) Requires that proposals for program production or acquisition, to the extent practical, should be evaluated by panels of outside experts representing diverse interests. At the same time, CPB is expected to use prudent business judgement in all program funding activities."

We offer this paper as a modest proposal to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and to Robben Fleming, to help resolve the question of how "production or acquisition of programs from qualified independent producers" can be accomplished fairly, and with the greatest possible emphasis on involving the independent producers on as many decision-making levels as possible.

It should be remembered how we arrived at a point where independent producers were specifically written into a funding bill for public broadcasting by the Congress. The Carnegie

Commission offers some insight into the necessity of this conclusion;

"We have seen only sporadic efforts to permit artists access to the system; only rarely has the system been in a position to seek out the finest American talents, so that the public might benefit by their endeavor. Instead, we see independent producers required to 'affiliate' with a station in order to gain access to the system."

"Moreover, the stations', own cooperative program development process has too often preferred the safe and has discouraged individual achievement."

The Commission stated repeatedly and forcefully that the present system had not encouraged creative producers to do their best work. From the Commission's report on this point:

"No organization currently exists in public broadcasting with an exclusive, mission of supporting the creative activity 'necessary --for better • programming services * One producer told the Commission: 'Instead of seeing how one can clean up the top, please figure out what it is that creative individuals need in order to make programs. It is the individuals rather than the institutions that make programs, and it is institutions that must be created that will support those individuals(1)'. .." (p.77, A Public Trust; the Landmark Report of the Carnegie Commission on the Future of Public Broadcasting; (1) testimony by Michael Ambrosino before the Commission, Nov. 18, 1977.).

"The achievement of excellence in any field is rare. It requires specialized . and rather single-minded effort, a^ broad and constantly renewable pool of talent, and devotion to the process of creation rather than to maintenance of bureaucracies and turf. To institutionalize this vital activity is the' challenge that has eluded public broadcasting over the years." (ibid.)

We feel that, based on the Commission's eighteen exhaustive months of work, and from our own experience of the past three years in conducting seminars and workshops in public television with independents, it is absolutely necessary to help incorporate

a new structure into the system to effectively deal with the independent producers. Once again, Mike Ambrosino on this issue, "It is the individuals rather than the institutions that make programs, and it is institutions that must be created that will help those individuals" (p. 77 Carnegie Commission Report).

We feel that these institutions exist.

There is now, and has been for some time, an infra-structure within the independent video and film community that effectively accomplishes many of the goals that the Commission correctly feels have not been achieved in the broadcast system. Broadly speaking, these artist-run organizations are the Media Centers which serve the independents on a regional basis. Fortunately, therefore, it is not necessary to create new institutions to serve the artist; in this case they already exist.

Most of these organizations have been funded by the Media Arts program of the National Endowment for the Arts under its Media Arts Center and other related categories. A partial list follows: Bay Area Video Coalition, Boston Film/Video Foundation, Carnegie Film Section, Film Center of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Film-in-the-Cities, Global Village Video Resource Center, the Kitchen Center for Video And Music, Media Study/Buffalo, Museum of Modern Art Department of Film/Video, Northwest Film Study Center, Pacific Film Archive, Pittsburgh Filmmakers, Rocky Mountain Film Study Center, South Carolina Arts Commission, Southwest Alternate Media Center, University

Film Study Center, and the Walker Art Center.

There are also centers not funded under the Media Arts Center category. Among them are; Alabama Filmmakers Co-op, ^ and/or. Anthology Film Archives, Appalshop, Association of .Independent Film and Videomakers, Chicago Editing Center, Community Film Workshop of Chicago, Double Helix, Downtown Community T.V., Foundation for Art in Cinema, Grassroots TV Network, IMAGE, Institute for New Cinema Artists, Inter-Media Arts Center, Long Beach Museum of Art, Maine Film Alliance, Martha Stewart Communications, Millenium Film Workshop, Neighborhood Film Project, New Orleans Video Access Center, Northwest Media Project, Oblate Communications, Ohio State University Department of Photography and Cinema, Sheldon Film Theater, Sun Ship Communications, Synapse Video Center, Utah-US Film, Whitney Museum of American Art/Film and Video Department, Young Filmmakers/Video Arts. This list suggests the range of the field; it is not to suggest that all of these Centers could or would indeed desire to produce programs or series for public television.

Why are these organizations important in effectively supporting the work of independent producers both in the area of new productions and acquisitions?

Because throughout their existence they have gone through a rigorous process of peer group review procedures, they have enviable track records of fiscal accountability and fund raising skills and, most importantly, because they know the independent

film and videomakers best and have served them in their production, exhibition and distribution needs.

The field of Media Centers is organic and responds to changing needs and emerging talent. This structure is not the creation of a single bureaucracy in Washington, New York, or wherever. It is diverse and evolves as needs and talents emerge.

To mention a few examples, there is the recently formed Bay Area Video Coalition and the Boston Film/Video Foundation, both exciting and dynamic groups fulfilling real production and broadcast exhibition needs of film and videomakers, and there is the very recently formed "Public Interest Video Network," a coalition of ten or more media organizations that made history by broadcasting the recent anti-nuclear demonstration in Washington, D.C. These organizations have grown out of the field and are responsive to the needs of the makers, needs that must be reached if support of projects is to be effective.

What specific role can these organizations play in the identification and support of the independent producers?

John J. O'Connor, in a May 20, 1979 New York Times piece, addressed himself to the definition of the "independent", and his broadcast involvement:

"Obviously the role of the independent producer on television - public or commercial - will not be determined easily or very amicably. Merely defining 'independent' is a problem. Technically, Norman Lear,

the Children's Television Workshop and Dick Cavett/Daphne Productions are independent. But they are not included in most debates on the subject. Generally, the independents in question are small producing organizations or individual producers who operate outside television stations and distribution organizations. The content of their work ranges from video art to documentaries."

The funding bill that President Fleming was reporting on to Congress, the Public Telecommunications Financing Act, specifically called for the support of "small independent producers and their organizations." The groups that are most directly in touch with the small independent producers are the Media Centers which exhibit their works, provide a center or place for independents to relate to, and, increasingly, produce series for local or regional broadcast of works. Further along in the same May 20th Times article, John J. O'Connor speaks of these efforts on the part of independents to change the present situation:

"In-attempting to change this pattern and, at the same time, establish some sort of foothold within the broadcasting establishment, independents have been organizing festivals, museum seminars and assorted lobbying efforts across the country. One thing is clear at this point; They can no longer be ignored." (p. 38)

Again, all of these efforts have been carried out by Media Centers organized and run by independent producers. We feel these same organizations can serve an important function in the dissemination of funds to independents, in aiding the production of finished works, in providing post-production facilities, and in packaging series for local and national broadcast.

What specific strengths do Media Centers possess that would make the tasks of fund dissemination, production and post-production, and producing of series possible?

1. First, and foremost, they are the organizations that have chosen to affiliate with, and in most cases have been started and are run by, independent producers.
2. As a group, the Media Arts Centers, as identified by the National Endowment for the Arts, possess considerable skills in fund raising and are fiscally responsible. The combined budgets of the Media Arts Centers supported in that category run into the millions of dollars, with a total average annual budget of each Center in excess of \$200i000. Three Centers have recently been awarded National Endowment for the Arts Challenge Grants (Media Center/Buffalo, Global Village, and the Pittsburgh Filmmakers), passing the rigorous and demanding review procedures with high evaluation scores. They are, as a group, very accountable and fiscally responsible, showing a considerable capacity to raise funds from diverse sources of funders and the general public; in this regard they resemble the public stations, but on a smaller scale.
3. Dr. Fleming spoke of the need of the Corporation to have "proposals for program production or acquisition ... evaluated by panels of outside experts representing diverse interests." With the panel system presently functioning at the National Endowment for the Arts Media-Arts Program, over 50 panel members each year evaluate

proposals from the field, both on an organizational and an individual basis. These panels are composed of experts from public broadcasting, the arts, commercial television, and writers, critics, independent producers, curators and others. Therefore, the professional references called for by Congress for the Corporation are built naturally into the Media Centers' organizations. In addition, most Centers use peer group review to run festivals, exhibition programs and allocations for production facilities.

4. These organizations represent a national trend in the film and video areas. They are the media "alternate spaces" of a few years ago. They have existed as organizations for an average of seven years, with a few existing considerably longer. They are the new and "emerging" institutions of the video and film community.

In order to take the steps necessary to alter the present public broadcasting system which has not functioned as well as most independents and others would like, it is necessary to turn to new elements in the community. And from Carnegie II the message is clear. They called for the "creation of a format balanced between the differing needs of producers and stations." Carnegie II has also postulated the creation of an Endowment that would not be part of any one station or PBS but would have a degree of autonomy in the Trust concept.

We feel that these statements are significant, for they recognize the need to have structures functioning outside of the present station/network system to solve the creative needs

of both independent producers and producers within the stations. Carnegie II made it clear that it is not sufficient simply to turn to an existing station or group of stations to solve the problems of creative producers but to create new structures.

Media Centers have had successful experience in productions and series for independents as well as extensive experience in choosing and, exhibiting the best of the independent-works; and they have worked closely with public television stations.

The Bay Area Video Coalition is an outstanding example. BAVC has put together a major series of independents' works for which this Media Center has raised full funding (approximately \$130,000 with \$50,000 from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting). The series will be post-produced at KCET in Los Angeles and aired on six California stations and later on the Public Broadcasting System.

Another example is Media Study/Buffalo, which is completing the programming of a series of independents' works which will be aired over WNED in Buffalo. James Blue is the executive producer of the series for Media Study.

One of the longest-running independent series comes from the South West Alternate Media Project, formerly known as the Rice Media Center. They have produced a 13-week series of independent works broadcast on KUHT in Houston, and have done so for the past four years. The program, called "The Territory," has been a great success.

Finally, University Community Video in Minneapolis-St. Paul is a group that has consistently produced powerful works that have been broadcast locally, and some nationally.

A host of other groups have strong production capability; the Chicago Editing Center, Downtown Community Television, Synapse, Pittsburgh Filmmakers, and others. On a national level, Global Village is currently preparing a national series for independents, working in cooperation with six public stations, and a regional series for New York State.

The Media Centers can provide diversity and a wide range of viewpoints greatly needed on American television.

As the American broadcasting industry now stands, it is as though there were only the New York Times, the Washington Post. The Los Angeles Times, and, let us say, National Geographic Magazine. This is not to malign these publications; they are necessary and often brilliant publications. But they cannot possibly duplicate the service of providing the opposite, eclectic, hard-hitting or unusual viewpoint to the American public that smaller publications often do. The New York Times could not publish a magazine like The Nation, for clearly. The Nation requires for its very existence the freedom to be small, independent and eclectic. We feel that the Media Centers can provide the diversity of viewpoints that have proven so difficult to broadcast.

Why Should Media Centers, and not the public stations, be responsible for working closely with independents and for producing material for broadcast ?

One could certainly make a good case that the success of the Television Laboratory at WNET proves that stations can function effectively in working with artists. The Lab has indeed had a degree of success, but that has required a considerable

investment on the part of the station as well as on the part of a number of funding agencies,.- and- has required the skills and talent of someone of the caliber of David Loxton. And it is the only example; no other station has attempted anything on the scale of the TV Lab, with the exception of WGBH, and in that case they are working closely with an independent media center, the Boston Film/Video Foundation.

After three years and 18 programs of our series of seminar/workshops called "The Independent Producer, Public Television, and the New Video Technologies", a national series of seminar/workshops held in conjunction with public television stations, we have concluded that it is simply unfair to ask a station to set up what amounts to a media center at the station to work with artists. The commitment in time, energy and space is simply beyond the capacity of most - not to mention the extreme pressure that most stations are under to raise funds and operate a broadcast facility.

What would be necessary in order for the media center to succeed in producing for public television?

1. It would be necessary to enlist the services of the National Endowment for the Arts Media Arts Panel in the initial selections of centers that meet the requirements.
2. It would be necessary, as a first step, to select those organizations that make a strong commitment to broadcasting independent works. There are a few with current series in the works, and others that have demonstrated strong production capacity.

3. Any center that would be considered for funding should have a strong working relationship with at least one public television station. It should be a cooperative relationship, stressing the strength of each partner.
4. The center should be funded to produce a certain number of programs in a given year, with maximum freedom given to each to select the independents and prepare the programs. We would suggest cooperation with public stations, in all phases of the process.

IN SUMMARY

The Media Arts Centers provide an opportunity for the ; Corporation for Public Broadcasting to bring the most talented video and filmmakers in the country into public television. By giving a series of block grants to key centers that work closely with public stations, the Corporation could accomplish one of its main objectives, that of bringing into the system the smaller, talented independent producers.

One alternative is for CPB to take upon itself the task of viewing hundreds of thousands of applications from all parts of the country and of making fair judgements. Even if the Corporation took this approach, it still would not solve the problem of follow-through and other assistance to makers which is necessary to achieve success.

Another alternative would be to set. up a new central agency that would attempt to carry out CPB's task of awarding grants. This would be overly centralized, and therefore not regionally responsive. It would not take advantage of existing artists' structures, and it would force the independent to go to one place when it might be possible to provide many opportunities. One of the major strengths of public television is the diversity of the system. Independents have often found one station that would acquire a work where another would not. This pattern is healthy and should be emulated in the funding and support of independent producers.

Another possibility is to ask the stations themselves to take on the task of screening the hundreds of applications that would be made and to administer production grants to independents. We feel that most stations would be unable to maintain a TV Lab-type of operation, and it would be unfair both to the stations and independent producers to ask them to do so.

We feel that it is the Media Centers that can accomplish the goal set by Robben Fleming to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. And we feel that they can do it in a manner that would benefit all concerned, including the viewing public.

THE CASE FOR HISPANIC RECOGNITION
(The Case Against a Single Center
For Independent Television)

Presented to
Rockefeller Foundation's
Seminar Conference on Independent
Television Makers and Public
Communications Policy
June 6, 7, and 8, 1979

by

Jose Luis Ruiz

As an independent producer of Hispanic descent, I've encounter some different barriers in addition to those faced by-most independent producers, not only in the commercial broadcast industry, but the public broadcast service sector as well.

I do not feel that my artistry as an individual has received the respect necessary to foster the creative, innovative and quality of purpose so idealized. I have program ideas that I think do serve the public needs, although that public may not necessarily have the resources.

But if public funds are to support public broadcasting stations, then I think the burden of compliance should be placed upon those stations that seek public funds for general, programming or other use. Just as I must submit a proposal stating purpose, approach and proposed expenditures and audience served; so should public television stations state purpose, approach and proposed expenditures of requested funds in meeting their community's interest and needs (as indicated by their community ascertainment and annual EEO employment report).

Unfortunately cultural and racial barriers exist within the public broadcasting system as well as among the independent producers group, as I have been too often invited solely for the use of my surname rather than to be an active participant to certain meetings and conferences, or else limited to comment on the Hispanic minority- This in itself wouldn't be so bad except that Hispanic programming needs never evolve beyond discussion into production.

With only a week's notice to attend this conference, I've only had time to consider the following;

"THE CASE AGAINST A SINGLE CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT TELEVISION"

The future of public broadcasting and the role of independent producers are of great concern to those of us here today. In reviewing the topics to be discussed at this Seminar Conference hosted by the Rockefeller Foundation, I paused at the title "The Case For a Center for Independent Television^" and took thought.

I find that I cannot support the concept of a single Center for Independent Producers, because as past experience has revealed, it can never adequately service the needs of the Hispanic community.

Since I am an independent producer of Mexican ancestry, I am made aware that we all have different priorities, needs, ideologies/ and concerns. Independent producers are not a collective mind or body.

Past practices has taught Hispanics that a center that tries to encompass everyone's needs means that Hispanics receive little or no input or funding. For example, the WNET/TV Lab Independent Documentary Fund in its second year has failed to fund one Hispanic project; CPB's revolving Documentary Fund has failed to fund one Hispanic project," and Programs similar to Arden House [seminars for independent producers) has little to no involvement of Hispanics either as invited participants or exhibitors. This lack of consideration amongst these public-funded activities leads me to conclude that Hispanics must form their own center, utilizing their own management and creative forces in order not to come up once again on the short end of the stick. It would be ideal if a number of minority, anglo and special interest groups were funded

equally so each might have their own center for independent producers. Hispanics have taken another step in that direction. This week in Los Angeles a group of Hispanics involved in video and film met with community leaders and educators to form the Hispanic Film Institute. The purpose of H.F.I, is to provide a center for the training and advancement of Hispanic Film/Video makers with its own unique style and to provide a research library to house archival information and preserve the Hispanic heritage.

If the concept of Centers for Independent Producers is to be pursued, organizations such as H.F.I, and the Chicano Cinema Coalition, which has similar goals and objectives should be contacted and encouraged to work together with other independent producers to create these centers for the independent producers.

Since the Hispanics were not given the opportunity to present or contribute a position paper for this Conference, I suggest that the Rockefeller Foundation support such for inclusion in the published summary of this Conference.

Possible topics for address from the Hispanic point of view:

1. The accountability of local station management.
2. Propose application and review process for funds as to compliance.
3. Composition of Board of Directors of proposed Public Telecommunications Trust.
4. EEOC implementation and affirmative action.
5. Suggest possibility of multi-lingual and multicultural program alternatives with new technologies
6. Primetime access for minorities.